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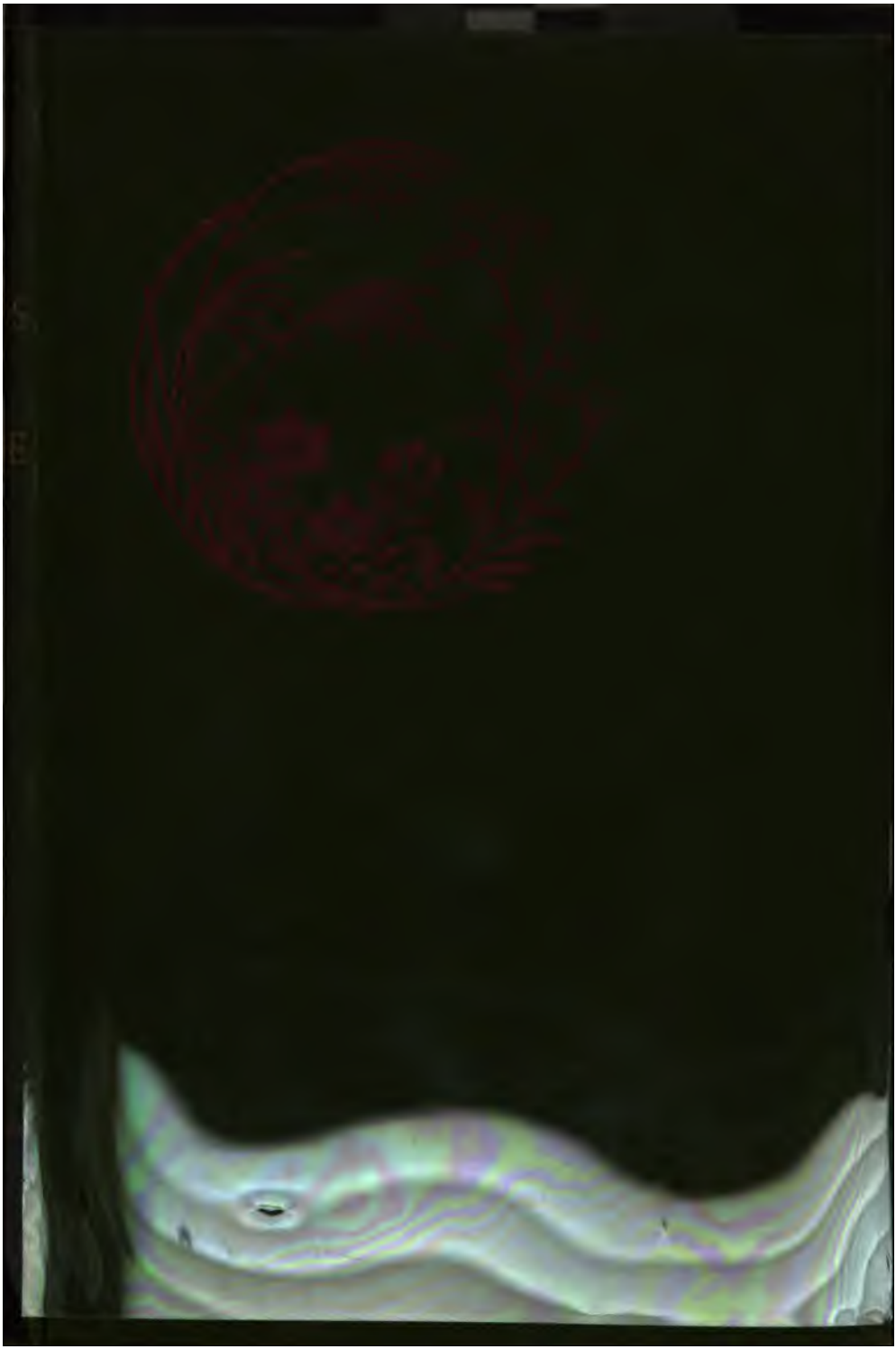

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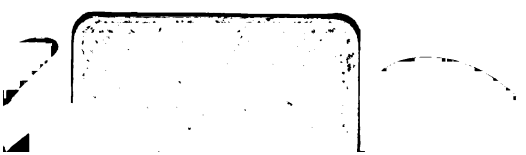

MY LORDS OF STROGUE.

A CHRONICLE OF IRELAND, FROM THE CONVENTION TO THE UNION.

BY

HON. LEWIS WINGFIELD,
AUTHOR OF 'LADY GRIZEL,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
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'God of Battles! aid us;
Let no despot's might
Trample or degrade us,
Seeking this our right!
Arm us for the danger;
Keep all craven fear
To our breasts a stranger—
God of Battles! Hear!'

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MY LORDS OF STROGUE.

CHAPTER I.

A NIGHT AT CROW STREET.

THE dowager's words produced their effect upon Doreen, despite her virtuous indignation. She no longer committed herself by indiscreet communings with the 'scatter-brained young men.' She seemed to be growing lukewarm to the cause as the decisive moment approached, shirking responsibility in a way her character belied, to the surprise of the patriots, amongst whom we must count Cassidy. The giant remarked with pained astonishment that she gave him no grateful look when he whispered about the pikes, when he hinted with dark nods that Phil and Biddy had been busy in the night; and he

reflected with self-upbraiding that this change must be due to his ill-timed wooing. No doubt it was presumptuous in a 'half-mounted' to aspire to an heiress, but sure she should accept as a compliment a piece of bungling for which her own charms were entirely responsible. He resolved to be more careful in the future, striving to bridge the breach by a nimble deference tempered by judicious sadness; and let no opportunity pass of making himself useful to the young earl. His hands were pretty full, thanks to my Lords Clare and Camden, who pursued the stormy tenor of their way with an edifying steadiness of purpose. He gladly rode errands for Lord Glandore, did shopping for the countess, drank bumpers in the Castle-yard in company with Major Sirr, waited about in my Lord Clare's anteroom; became a ubiquitous, faithful, and generally useful personage. He brought news sometimes of the gravest moment to the mysterious resorts where Dublin 'prentices were pretending to play ball; which hints resulted more frequently than not in a message smuggled in a loaf to the prisoners at Kilmainham and a courier sent galloping far away into the country.

The electric cloud loomed near on the horizon. Lord Clare watched the threatening vapour as it rolled, increasing hourly in volume, and, laughing, showed his gums. The ranks of the yeomanry were swelling day by day, thanks to the exertions of large proprietors whose interest it was to be well with the court; thanks to the complaisant alacrity

of the squireens who acted at the beck of the great landowners. Small riots took place both in the capital and in the provinces, tussles between brow-beaten peasants and a soldiery who grew hourly more insolent, which originated for the most part in taunts at the old faith. Rumours floating vaguely, none knew whence, became current gossip, hints of a French invasion, of a landing somewhere in the north, which should set free the enslaved Catholics —of a Republican crusade in favour of liberty of conscience. The Orange societies of the north took the alarm. 'Liberty of conscience indeed!' they cried. 'We remember what happened in King James's time, when the national religion was for a brief space triumphant; how Protestants were massacred and their property destroyed. We will repel such an invasion with all our might, and will just prick these presuming slaves a little as a warning of what may follow.' There were excesses in Armagh and the cities of the north; wherein cottages were burnt, cattle confiscated, their owners hewn in pieces. News of military outrages arrived in Dublin; and the public, growing uneasy, looked to the Castle to mark its attitude. Ever since Lord Camden's advent, people remarked, things had been going wrong. Traitors by dozens had been imprisoned or executed. Coercion was the order of the day. But popular opinion had been divided; one party declaring that traitors must be hanged for the security of the body politic, the opposite party cogently pointing out that if Government acted

with more prudence, men would not be driven into treason. But now the matter was taking a new form. One class, which had always been antagonistic to the other, was showing overt symptoms of the harshest tyranny. The Protestant ascendency party had banded itself together in armed force at the call of Government for the protection of the land. It was obvious that this armed force must not be permitted to exert its strength against its own brethren of another faith—to convert a deplorable harshness, of which in memory of man the instances were isolated, into a regularly organised system like that of Elizabeth. Government must interfere promptly, men said. These savage squireens, who swaggered in the King's colours, must be taught at once to curb their brutal proclivities, or a reign of terror would result such as shocked Europe in '89.

But Government did nothing of the kind. My Lord Clare held up his delicate hands in the lobby of the House of Lords, and, under shadow of William's statue, harangued passing senators upon the iniquity of the lower orders.

'It is awful,' he declared in his rasping voice. 'What will Mr. Pitt say? He will withdraw your pensions, my poor gentlemen, unless you act with decision. Arm your vassals, my lords. The French will come and murder us in our beds. I vow the country is in danger. The Catholics must be shown their place.'

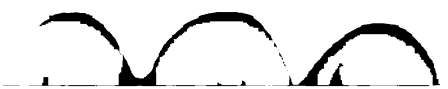
That the country was in danger there could be

little doubt; but it was not precisely from the side to which the crafty chancellor thought fit to point.

Parliament met in solemn conclave, and did as it was told. Curran and a few others rose up in their places, solemnly protesting against a policy which sprang from a hidden fear of the lower orders. An Act of Indemnity was passed with regard to the proceedings in the north. Magistrates and petty officers were held to have behaved wisely in permitting cottages to be burnt in the name of religion, in allowing fathers of families to be kidnapped in the night, and spirited away no one might tell whither. A profound feeling of wrath was stirred over all the land by the passing of this, and the Insurrection Bill which allowed it; whereby, amongst other things, a power of arbitrary transportation was given to magistrates, and outrages made legal which till now had been accomplished in defiance of the law. People saw clearly that the majority of both Lords and Commons were merely the representatives of their own greed and their own venality; that nothing could free motherland from a vicious thraldom of unpatriotic selfishness but a reform of Parliament and a complete change in the system of Government. How was this to be accomplished? There was the knotty point. Was the threatened rising of the masses really inevitable? Could they accomplish their objects at all if France should refuse substantial help? Was Government deliberately acting for a wicked purpose, or was the crime merely the negative one of incapacity?

Agitation-meetings blaming the executive were held about the country, at which, when he heard of them, my Lord Clare expressed his amazement, ingeniously stating in public that he was astonished at the mildness of the Viceroy in not severely punishing the agitators. Such a hint was not lost upon his amateur colonels and military magistrates. They began to exhibit renewed examples of vigorous zeal, destroying property at pleasure, searching houses for arms, treating the inhabitants with such brutality that women fell into convulsions and brought forth children before their time. A singular effect of these proceedings, which in itself spoke volumes, was a sudden moral reform among the peasantry. Men who had been drunken became reclaimed; fairs and markets were undisturbed by quarrelling; factions which had been at feud for centuries smoked the pipe of peace together. Hatred, kept down by fear, festered in the hearts of the children of the soil. It was felt that a moment was imminent when man might endure no more, when a down-trodden race must conquer its persecutors or seek relief from misery in death.

Doreen, from her retreat among the roses, watched the current of events which now rushed with rapid impetuosity towards an horizon of blood; and as month followed month, each laden with its progressive freight of trouble, wondered with beating heart that no news should be received from Tone. Had his projects failed? She knew that the difficulties with which he was called to cope were



immense. The last letter she had had from him, long ago now, spoke of an expedition getting ready, which should start before the end of summer. It was now August, and as she sat waiting week after week, both hope and expectation waning, a feeling of heart-sickness crept over her, which seemed to chill her life-blood and dry up her bones. One day, listlessly gazing as usual across the sea, she looked up and beheld red-polled Biddy making uncouth signals from the shrubbery—signals she had looked for so frequently in vain. A letter! Yes. It was—at last! But it brought no comfort. An expedition was nearly ready; but the leading spirit vacillated. General Hoche doubted whether the forces given to him were strong enough to do efficient service; whether the Irish were ready to receive them; whether the resources of Ireland had been truthfully laid before him.

To Tone's chagrin Hoche informed the Directory that it was fitting, before their ships and treasure were committed to the waters, that somebody of weight should come to France from Ireland, to corroborate Tone's statements and bring the latest news. It was vexatious—despairing! What was to be done? In this new strait the young patriot urgently applied to his friend Miss Wolfe, to consult with the United Irishmen as to some one being sent without delay. One of the Emmetts, Russell, Neilson, anybody who knew anything. She must see to this, or all was lost; for if no satisfactory tidings were speedily received the expedition would be

diverted to some other purpose, and Ireland left to fight her battles single-handed. In his trouble he had made statements which were rash, no doubt—had promised large sums to France, in the name of the future Directory of Ireland, and had said that many men of property desired the Revolution. Whoever was sent over must, to prevent further parleying, corroborate these statements. She must show extra caution however in dealing with this business, for a Judas was abroad, more than one, perhaps—there could be no doubt of that. Mr. Pitt seemed informed of everything that passed in Ireland—and in Paris too, for that matter. Caution and despatch were needful above all things.

Doreen laid down this letter to consider it, with a presentiment of evil. The fevered workings of our distempered minds are not so terrible as the sledge-hammer blows which sometimes fall on us. Even the harassed conjectures born of fear prove less dreadful than realities. This was a blow which numbed her faculties. For her father's sake, who loved the fleshpots, she had resolved to be a calm spectator of the coming struggle—to mark the arrival of the French convoy and its certain triumph; to crown the successful heroes in private with metaphorical laurels; to forego for her living father's sake the joy of publicly helping in the emancipation of her dead mother's people. But here was something which put all her resolutions to flight.

The entire scaffolding threatened to tumble about

the ears of those who held her sympathies; and it seemed that it might be in her power to prevent that catastrophe. So long as neutrality was likely to do the Catholic party no harm, she was prepared to sacrifice the vanities which hang about picturesque heroism—to view the glorious results as a mere spectator instead of walking in the procession under the triumphal arches. But this letter woefully changed the face of the prospect. It was quite possible apparently (and she felt cold as she realised it) that the gorgeous fabric in which her soul revelled was to vanish into air, and that she might afterwards be accused of having by apathy brought about its crumbling! What was she to do? What in the scale was this twaddle of the dowager's—this buckram rubbish of an old school—this bit of red-tape, which might come to be the halter of liberty! But then her father—could she possibly have a right to bring suffering on him—to be in her own person the Nemesis who should deal punishment on him for his time-serving weakness?

The tumult within her was such that her ears throbbed and her throat seemed closing—yet her unaided judgment must settle this question with calm pros and cons. There is nothing so clearing to a healthy intellect, temporarily clouded, as strong muscular exertion. Miss Wolfe stepped into the cockleshell which was her own, and went for a row upon the bay.

She watched the shadows of the herring-boats, listened absently to the rhythmed cry of the fisher-

folk as they landed the produce of their night's labour on the little quay, nodded in acknowledgment of their salutes, rowed herself with firm nervous strokes into mid-water, and then drifted. The freshness of a light breeze and the exertion seemed to string her nerves and clear her mind. She lay back in the light shallop, and trailing her brown fingers in the water, meditated. No! Her allegiance was due equally to both parents. Her father had cast his lot with the mammon of unrighteousness and gleaned the pleasant result of the proceeding. That was no reason for her to betray her mother's people. Much as she loved her father she differed widely from his views. She would keep in the background as much as might be, for his sake; but it certainly behoved her to act with promptitude and energy now. Send somebody over! Whom was she to send? Who was important enough for the mission? In whom might complete faith be placed? Cassidy was too bungling and stupid. Moreover he knew no word of French, and would be sure to make mistakes. Robert Emmett? Too young, too romantic; a student in Trinity besides, whose lengthened absence would be remarked. Thomas Emmett, alas! was in durance vile. Whom might she send? Whom? If Terence would only take things seriously, he was the very man for the undertaking. What a pity she had not used her influence with him to good purpose, Miss Wolfe thought with compunction. The Judith and Holofernes idea was

idiotic, of course; but Terence was a fish that might have been played with a satisfactory result. Yet, after all, could the sacredness of the cause justify her in enacting Delilah to his Samson? Surely not. With humiliation she admitted that the trick would be unworthy of one who lived under the roof of Strogue.

Terence had grown dreadfully cross of late. Once or twice her heart had bounded, for she had seemed to see that he was moody and disturbed on account of the way events were marching. Certainly he came home sometimes from the Four-courts with fierce denunciations on his lips anent the culpable folly of Lord Camden—but then he always calmed down again, when he was no longer hungry, hoping for better days, if Lord Clare would really take the helm. His belief in Lord Clare was the blindness which might be expected from a too simple mind.

As the damsel drifted she built castles for herself. If Terence, who was manly enough and true enough, would only take things a little more *au sérieux!* If men would only be true to their first impulse for good, what a much better world it would be! for, taken unawares, it is nearly always our good angel who speaks first. He is always awake, if timid; but his dusky, coarse-natured fellow snores so loudly, that it is no easy matter to make out clearly what he counsels. Terence grew indignant often; was very hot over the Indemnity Bill and Insurrection ditto, but neither ever disturbed his sleep one jot, or interfered in the smallest

degree with his capacity for grouse and claret. What a pity it was! A dependable man, a man of rank, whose heart was in the right place if it would but speak—a man who, from his position, would with a breath remove Hoche's scruples. But there was no use in thinking of him. Somebody must be sent, and speedily, or the interests of the United Irishmen would be compromised. Somebody must be sent—but who?

The young lady became aware that she was drifting out to sea—that it would require all her nautical science and muscular power to bring her frail boat to port by sunset; and she was bound to be home again by sunset on this especial evening, because it was a 'lady's night' at Crow Street Theatre, and my lady had warned her that loyal ladies must 'show' there, because the Viceroy would be present, supported by a galaxy of beauty. So she handled her sculls like a true connexion of the pirate-earls; and as the warm blood tingled in her veins with the exertion, sent her little bark dancing over the water, her brain working busily the while.

She decided that it was not possible to stand aloof at this juncture. Tone—the hero, at whose shrine she worshipped—conjured her to act. She would meet at Crow Street, probably, several of the prominent United Irishmen, and must choose her opportunity to confer secretly with them. Who could be sent to Paris with safety? None but Cassidy. What a pity he was so stupid! He meant well—of that she felt assured; but he would

plead poverty—that was little matter, for she had jewels which might be pledged. But might he claim something more? Love-making and conspiracy do not go well together. A certain scene at the kennels recurred to her mind; and it was with a flush, more due to displeasure than healthful exercise, that at length she shot her boat beside the landing-stage. An unaccustomed shadow caused her to start and look upwards. A man was looking at her, with his thin legs apart and his arms folded across his chest—a little man, with elf-locks hanging about his face, and a strange melancholy smile upon his lips.

'Faix! and ye're a grand boatwoman, Miss Doreen,' Mr. Curran said; 'and ye look mighty well fingering those planks. I've bin watching you this half-hour, and wondering too—wondering whether, if I had been out alone where you were, I could ever be coaxed to return.'

Doreen looked up quickly at him. Had something dreadful come to pass? Something dreadful was happening hourly with exasperating monotony.

'We didn't expect you over to-day. Is Sara with you?'

'No. I trotted over on my nag to see if Terence had returned; and must go back at once, as Sara wants to go to Crow Street.'

'Is there anything new?' the young lady inquired, with averted face, as she fastened up her boat. She was constantly fretting morbidly about the slowness of Tim's tread, as people will who

are devoured with impatience, and yet half-dread the fulfilment of their wishes.

'New! No,' grunted the small lawyer. 'Would to heaven there were! No change could be for the worse. I have been engrossed these two days past in the Orr trial. Didn't Terence tell you? Well, well, he wouldn't shock ye. It's nothing new, faith! And there's no good talking of such things at home. They gave the verdict against us, despite all that I could urge; and the injustice was so glaring that Terence flew in a passion. Upon my word, he looked as fierce as his brother, the Prince of Cherokees! He vowed there was some mistake —that he would in person explain matters to the Viceroy (foolish lad—not to have learnt better by this time!); and so I trotted over to hear if he had succeeded in his suit.'

'What was the case?'

'Nothing particularly novel—another of the many evil results of the chancellor's Insurrection Bill,' grumbled Curran. 'One of its clauses breathes dire vengeance against such as administer illegal oaths. Rubbish! considering what you and I, young lady, know about a green bough in Britain's crown. Such oaths will be administered so long as this corrupt *régime* continues—just as they have been for five years and more. A fine would meet the case—and it should be a light one; for indeed the provocation is not slight. But now such administering has become penal. A soldier—a drunken fellow in the Fencibles—comes forward, swears that

one Orr—a harmless, obscure farmer, against whom he probably has a grudge—has induced him to take the oath, "Are you straight? as straight as a rush," and the rest. Maybe he has, maybe he hasn't—that's not the point; the jury retire, and remain closed up for hours—all through last night—far into this morning, and by-and-by give in a verdict of guilty. That farmer, who, on my conscience, I believe was innocent, is swinging by this time unless Terence's mission has been successful.'

The two walked up the steep path, which led to the Abbey terrace, in silence. Doreen was thinking that her resolve was right. It should be no fault of hers if the French fleet failed to come with healing on its wings. Curran was plunged in sadness, for he was beginning to be convinced that the triumphal car of Government would bear him down—chosen champion, as he believed himself—with its overpowering weight, as it did others. Of what use was his eloquence as an advocate in presence of packed juries and bribed witnesses? It was talking to the wall—or worse, for at least the wall serves its purpose without shame, and is washed white, and receives no bribes; Major Sirr's juries and witnesses were accustomed, on the other hand, to arrange their affairs in a jovial fashion in the major's sanctum before coming into court. There was little of the whitewash about them!

When Doreen conducted the lawyer into the tapestry-saloon, my lady was concerned at her eccentric little friend's dejection; and easily pre-

vailed on him to dine before returning to the Priory. Terence did not appear, which was of evil augury; so his chief took the opportunity of the ladies retiring to their toilet, to mount his nag and gallop homewards, with a leaden weight within his breast.

Neither the dowager nor her niece were theatre-going people. The former held dim uncomplimentary opinions about the private lives of actresses, and her pride of caste revolted at the familiar behaviour of the gallery, who were given to homely conversation with their betters in the boxes, and to making rude comments upon the proceedings on the stage. Miss Wolfe disliked the play, because mimic woes and mimic laughter were alike an insult to the soreness of her heart, and the too real sorrows of the world in which she lived. Yet both were compelled by fashion to show themselves in Crow Street whenever a specially prominent goddess of *ton* thought fit to command a night. On such occasions the auditorium was illuminated with wax candles; the rank of the metropolis in diamonds and feathers filled the boxes; pit-tickets were freely distributed among the tradespeople with whom the lady dealt, whilst she took up her own position at the extreme end of the refection-room (a fine gallery erected by Mr. Fred. Jones, the manager), bowing a welcome to all who rallied round her.

On this particular evening the Lady-Lieutenant herself had commanded the performance, so all the adherents of the Castle were there in state—members of the peerage in brand-new uniforms;

the cabinet, consisting of the chancellor, the chief secretary, the speaker, and the attorney—and such a show of female beauty as Dublin can always boast. Lady Camden held quite a court in the refection-room, supported by Lord Clare, whose arrogant countenance beamed with the consciousness of strength. My Lord Camden had shuffled away to the curtained viceregal box, pretending to be engrossed with the wretchedness of Lucy Lockit; the fact being that his conscience began to worry him, and that he withdrew from public gaze as much as ceremony would permit.

My lord chancellor was not a man ever to lurk in corners, or to shun a few paltry hisses. He stood forward beside the Viceroy's wife, nodding to the crowds who bowed before him with a loathsome smirk, too coldly overbearing to reck what men thought of him, provided they bent the knee. He had reached at this time the acme of his power. His word was law. He browbeat his comrades in the cabinet till honest Arthur Wolfe quite winced. He had undertaken to mould into shape a corrupt upper class, and his first move had been to give a rein to their bad passions. His second was to cultivate an unusual urbanity; for it would be needful by-and-by to win the members of the Bar, and to lay in a good stock of promising raw material in the shape of young M.P.'s just rough from grass. He made a point, too, of being particularly civil to girls, for he said that if the confidence of the females in a house is won, the men may be counted on as gained.

Satan found no footing in Paradise till he made sure of Eve.

So my Lord Clare tripped hither and thither in his natty attire, complimenting one, grinning at another; suggesting an ice to a young lady; confounding a sheepish youth by offering his jewelled snuff-box; laughing a hyena-laugh at some feeble joke; making himself so pleasant that folks stared in wonder. Ladies of highest rank rustled up and curtseyed, then formed into a parterre of shot silks and waving plumes behind my Lady Camden. It was a magnificent spectacle of brilliancy and wealth.

What mattered the cries of those who sat in darkness? what signified the cloud that was rolling quickly nearer? The Countess of Glandore, a grand sight, in the family jewels, swept into her place, led forward by Mr. Wolfe, who had advanced to meet his sister; whilst Lord Clare raised Doreen's fingers to his lips with a gallant bow, vowing that her father should be proud of such rare charms. And well he might, and was, indeed, for there lingered on the girl's face a heightened colour which gave a lustre to her eye, while the roundness of her tall figure was shown off at its very best by a tight-fitting robe of yellow crape, elaborately embroidered with silver tassels. Her dark coils of hair were knotted round her head in a plain thick diadem, raised high behind to show its noble contour where it joined her neck; while the olive skin seemed to acquire a richer hue by contrast with

a pale coral necklet and long ear-drops. Lord Clare looked at her with a half-sarcastic smile, and said:

'Will you walk in the lobby and survey the house? I always like to show myself with a lovely girl upon my arm. There is a sight there, too, that will please you, I think.'

Calmly she took his arm. Etiquette demanded that she should remain in the theatre for half-an-hour. It mattered little how she killed the time; nevertheless her eyes wandered restlessly about in search of Cassidy, to whom she was resolved to speak if possible. Suddenly she started and turned scarlet. In an upper box, talking earnestly together, were Cassidy and young Robert; with them Tom Emmett, Russell, and the rest, whom she supposed to be safe under lock and key within Kilmainham gaol.

'I thought you would be surprised,' drawled the chancellor. 'See how Government is maligned! The proceedings of those young gentlemen were such that we were obliged to lock them up. We could not do otherwise, you know. But having given them this lesson, you see we've humanely let them out again. Let us hope they'll be wise—wiser, for instance, than Mr. Tone appears to be—who is indeed singularly foolish. He seems to imagine that men of property will rally to his standard when he arrives with his precious expedition. Oh, my country! How truly is thy colour green! Here is an adventurer without a sou,

grandiloquently promising to pay vast debts of gratitude!'

Doreen looked up in the speaker's face suspiciously. The very language of the letter she had received that day! Her aunt's warning, hitherto forgotten, flashed across her. '*See that your correspondence is not tampered with.*' Verily, Tone was right. There was a Judas playing a devilish game somewhere.

'Mr. Tone has been long absent,' she said, with a troubled face.

'None the less mischievous,' retorted the other, carelessly. 'But his claws are cut, for we know all he does as soon as it is done. Now, if Government has erred, is it not on the side of leniency?'

'The fox was very civil to the bird on the tree-branch,' Mr. Curran observed dryly, who with Sara now joined them, 'until the fowl was fool enough to drop his cake! Your lordship is a bad Irishman, we know; but you should not take us for a race of idiots. The people are too quiet. You miss the trenchant articles in Tom Emmett's newspaper. You perceive that even the Orange outrages of Armagh have failed to goad the poor cowed creatures to rebellion. Give them more rope, my lord, and they'll certainly hang themselves—aye, and me too amongst them, I dare say!'

Lord Clare coloured slightly, and bit his lip, but answered nothing.

'At a moment when the foe is at our gates,' Curran pursued bitterly—'for the French arma-

ment at Brest is surely meant for Ireland—do you strive to unite all parties against a common enemy? No! Look at the scenes which are daily enacted under your auspices in the north. Robbery, rape, and murder; one brother at another brother's throat. Yet I am wrong. We are of one accord on one point. You are uniting us as one man against the conciliation of our animosities and the consolidation of our strength. Alas for Erin! Rent by faction as she is, there is nothing for her but a bridewell or a guard-house—the grinding tyranny of England or the military despotism of France!'

Arthur Wolfe, who was always endeavouring to prevent these two from snarling, here interposed, and dragged the irascible little lawyer away. The chancellor, however, fired a parting shot—crying out in a tone of airy innocence:

'On my honour, I know not what you'd have. We give every one as much liberty as possible. Look up at the gallery this moment. Every man in it has a bludgeon or shillalagh—and they're all staring at the box where the ex-prisoners are. I vow they look monstrous dangerous. It's brave of my lord-lieutenant to sit there so quietly!'

It was true that all eyes were turned from time to time to that particular box, as though something unusual might be expected to take place. Meanwhile the unconscious lady-lieutenant in the refection-room continued to smirk and bow, highly pleased at the full gathering around her.

Stout Madam Gillin panted through the crowd in an amazing turban of coquelicot and gold, distributing hearty handshakes to the right and left; and Norah looked so pretty as she brought up the rear, that the Countess of Glandore's ire was kindled, and she glanced anxiously about for her elder son. He was not present though, for he never would go anywhere where there were high-born young ladies.

Mrs. Gillin too was looking out for somebody, and, perceiving Curran, beckoned him with her fan.

'The young man,' she said in an undertone—'you know who I mean—I hear from old Jug that he's mighty annoyed about this Orr case. Indeed it's bad enough i' faith, but don't let him be rash.'

'Terence?' Curran replied; 'I've been expecting him every moment.'

'He's not here,' returned Mrs. Gillin. 'His man Phil's below with orders to await his coming. I don't like his getting mixed up in these things. It's not his place, you know. If his mother had a grain of goodness—but there! I can't mention her with patience.'

Curran looked grave, and hurried away to cross-question Phil. It was singular that Terence should not have appeared. The two ladies, between whom there was the bond of a secret, looked each other in the eyes, and temptation was too much for my lady to resist.

'These are indeed dangerous times,' she remarked sweetly to Lady Camden, 'when it behoves us all to do our duty. I beg you will assure his excellency that Glandore will not shrink from his. He can be of little use here where so many have come forward; but he will retire to Donegal as soon as it shall seem needful to watch over his tenants in the interest of Government. And I should not be surprised—but it is a terrible indiscretion—*if when things are settled he should bring back with him a bride.*'

The stroke went home. Norah turned deadly pale; and Madam Gillin, who had commenced confidences about flannel with a neighbour, found herself suddenly called upon to attend to her daughter, who was fainting. Scarcely had the court circle gathered round the girl, than a new source of commotion became evident in the lobby. High words were being bandied, with a low accompaniment of murmuring. The harsh accents of the chancellor were ringing in remonstrance; Doreen, who, despite her aunt's frowns, had handed her pouncet-box to Madam Gillin, became aware that the other voice was Terence's, raised in unusual indignation. She was quickly carried by the stream to the scene of the disturbance.

Yes; it was Terence, sure enough—in his boots; his hair disordered; a look of menace on his white face; and Lord Clare was striving to bar his passage. Honest Phil behind, firing-iron in hand as usual, stood watching his master's eye.

'Let me pass, my lord!' the young man was saying fiercely. 'An innocent man's life hangs on a thread. I have striven to see his excellency for hours, but have been prevented. He is in his box I know, and I will see him. It cannot be that he knows what's happening! The conscience-stricken jury have repented of their crime, they have made solemn oath that they convicted Orr (God have mercy on them!) when they had been made hopelessly drunk by Major Sirr. Even that's not all. The soldier, too, is afraid of what he's done, and owns that he had a private reason for his malice. Orr will be hanged at dawn unless Lord Camden signs his respite. I'm sure his excellency cannot know what's passing! It's the effect of this horrible one-witness law of yours. Even Caiaphas and his Sanhedrim dared not, in the great judicial murder, to set aside the law which demands at least two witnesses. Even Jezebel suborned two men of Belial to bring about the end of Naboth!'

Perceiving that the throng were in favour of the pleader, Lord Clare strove to draw away the son of his old friend, lest the public should think fit to take an inconvenient part in the discussion—an effort in which he found unexpected help from Curran. The party retreated therefore into an adjoining cloak-room, followed only by a few, while Phil kept doughty guard without, and Lady Camden tried to look as if she were not flustered.

'Oh, that drunkenness should be employed to procure the murder of a man!' Terence cried in

agitation. 'If Orr dies, this will be the most savage act which has disgraced even our tribunals. I have striven to believe in the honesty of Government. Let us go together and explain to his excellency while there's yet time!'

The chancellor laid his hand on the young man's shoulder as if to soothe a petulant child; while Curran sat on a table with arms crossed and a sour smile flitting about his lips.

'Young gentleman,' Lord Clare said, 'take the advice of an older man and your mother's friend. Keep aloof from these matters, and don't give credence to grandams' tales. We understand what we are doing, and want no dictation from raw youths—we are satisfied of Orr's guilt. You are keeping bad company, as I warned you once' (with a furtive side-glance at Mr. Curran), 'and will get yourself into trouble!'

Terence's arms dropped to his sides, and he stood thinking. A whispering without could plainly be distinguished through the closed door. He looked for help to his chief, who had spoken out so bravely at the trial, but who now swung his legs in silence.

Presently he sighed, and passing both hands over his face, said slowly: 'Then they were right—I could not, and would not believe it. The lord-lieutenant, then, is a passive instrument in the hands of wicked men—he is made, for a purpose, grossly, inhumanly, to abuse the royal prerogative of mercy, of which the King himself is but a

trustee for the benefit of his people. Some of those jurymen were threatened by suborned fellow-jurors — their tottering consciences deadened for awhile by drink; but they have woke to remorse in time. You say this hideous farce may not be stopped! Beware, Lord Clare! Remember to whom you must answer for this man's life! It's true—all true—and I am helpless!'

Lord Clare was provoked. Things were assuming an awkward and unexpected phase. It would not do to have a scandal in the theatre. Suppressing his wrath, he whispered to Mr. Curran before leaving the apartment:

'This boy must not be made a scapegoat. I rely on you to use your influence over him for his family's sake. He has listened to idle gossip, and ardent youth is easily set ablaze. This is most untoward. I will remove their excellencies at once and disappoint those donkeys who are greedily on the look-out for an *esclandre*.'

His rasping voice was heard presently above the hum in polished periods, deploring that false reports should so easily be credited; explaining that the too sensitive Viceroy must be protected from his own softness, calling for their excellencies' coach without delay.

'Can nothing more be done for Orr? It is too awful!' the junior asked his chief, clinging to his coat with anxious hands.

'If aught could be done, should I have remained silent?' was the dry rejoinder.

Then the lawyer bethought him of his child in the crush, and sallied forth in search of her.

Master Phil, with instinctive respect for a great man, stood aside when the chancellor made his exit, allowing the cloak-room to be flooded with eager inquirers. First entered Cassidy and Doreen, burning to hear news.

Terence roused himself from his reverie, and, clasping a hand of each, muttered in choking words:

'I have fought against conviction long enough. There are limits to an honest man's forbearance. Cassidy! I'll take the oath.'

The giant knitted his brows, and, staring at the cornice, whistled. Doreen darted forth such a golden flash from her cairngorm eyes as flooded the heart of the tempest-tossed young man with a gleam of sunshine.

'Oh, cousin!' he murmured. 'You who are my star! Forgive me for having mistrusted the direction of your guidance! I am easy-going, and not prone to believe evil. But my eyes are opened now. Ireland's soil is sick with the blood of centuries. A little while, and please God she shall bleed no more!'

'Mr. Cassidy!' the girl said, with heaving breast and such a joyous confusion as prevented her from reading the giant's face, 'did I not say to you just now that after darkness comes the morning? Surely night must be at its blackest now, Terence. I take you at your word. This change is a miracle

wrought by heaven in the nick of time to prevent Theobald's efforts from being frustrated. I see it, and am grateful. A champion must be tried, you know,' she whispered, smiling, 'and pass through the ordeal which is to prove his faith. I give you yours at once. It is urgently needful that some one should start forthwith for France, to act in concert there with Theobald. Can you make up your mind to this? Yes or no—there is no time for hesitation.'

Terence, a prey still to overmastering agitation, clasped the brown hand that was like a leaf in both of his, while the giant's frown was fixed on one and then the other.

'I told you one day,' the young man whispered, 'that for one reward I would set at naught the traditions of my family. If I succeed in the task which you assign to me——'

A shade passed across the sunlight of Doreen's enthusiasm. How persistently people tried to rehearse love-passages on the floor of the charnel-house!

'Do not let us talk of such things,' she faltered dreamily. 'Mr. Cassidy, you can see the oath administered this evening. Come straight home, Terence—and I'll manage to meet you when the rest are gone to bed. You will have to start betimes, *mon preux chevalier*; and return as quickly as you may, bearing good news. See to the taking of the oath, Mr. Cassidy, and for once do not make mistakes.'

'I will see to all!' ejaculated the giant, hoarsely; 'though I risk my neck in doing it.'

Another warm pressure of the hand—a lingering look—and Doreen was gone. My lady had harshly summoned her, dismayed at Mr. Curran's recital of the scene, and had bade her don her mantle—wrapt herself in the contemplation of fresh troubles. Madam Gillin, too, had listened to his story, and her round, good-humoured face was drawn out as she listened to inordinate length.

'I can't stand this,' she said by-and-by, to Mr. Curran, as he cloaked her. 'That magnificent dowager who has trundled off in the grand carriage will—as I judge—leave difficulties to unravel themselves. She doesn't like the boy, and would be glad he should come to ruin for reasons buried in her stony heart. But I promised his father to be a guardian angel, and, please God, I will. You must keep him out of mischief—do you hear?'

Keep him out of mischief! Easier said than done; but it was worth trying for. Mr. Curran, unaware of the interchange of sundry tender glances in the cloak-room, did not despair of success. He elbowed in the throng till he met his junior, and bade him be in attendance early at the Four-courts.

'The Four-courts!' scoffed Terence, with lamentable disrespect. 'When justice dies, why dally with her empty robes? I've other fish to fry.'

'Sure it's Misthress Doreen that's been at him,' laughed big Cassidy, with rather forced indifference.

'Who'd be proof against the blarney of the Dhas Astore?'

'Has Miss Wolfe been up to anything? what?' demanded the lawyer, knitting his shaggy eyebrows.

'It's a match they'll be making of it—Lord love the purty pair!' bawled the nettled giant. 'The gintleman's to be complimented who's thus favoured.'

'Is this true?' Curran inquired. 'Has she been persuading you to make a fool of yourself? I turned you out of my house, though I love you like a son, to withdraw you from what might prove a dangerous atmosphere. Maybe I'd better have kept you after all.'

'Perhaps, if I succeed in this mission, she may be mine!' Terence muttered in ecstasy, oblivious for the moment of the fate of the condemned.

'And for such a vague *perhaps*,' Curran retorted in disgust, 'these goslings will risk their lives!'

CHAPTER II.

DOREEN'S PLANS.

IT is proverbial that the preaching of the wisest sage may be reckoned as naught in its influence on a young man's fancy when opposed by a siren's smile. Doreen had never, during the years of her sojourn at the Abbey, tried to enlist Terence on the side of her oppressed people. It would have been disloyal to have done so. But now that his long-careless heart had taken the flame of its own accord, it was not likely she should attempt to extinguish it. Having communed with Tom Emmett, she directed her admirer to ride forthwith to Cork, ostensibly on professional business, slip thence with secrecy across the water to see Hoche, and then return with as little delay as might be. He was to tell the French general that ten thousand soldiers were expected—that less than five thousand would be useless—that arms without soldiers would be re-

fused, because a rising would be the immediate consequence of a landing of arms, and it was not thought desirable to turn the attempt, which should be made in force, into a desultory species of Chouannerie. Further, he was to employ all his eloquence to ensure a speedy start, declaring that Erin yearned to break her bonds, that a small nucleus of regular troops was all that was required to start with, as the peasantry were prepared to rise if sure of being properly led.

These orders being succinctly given by a demure girl with rich dark hair and a touching sadness of expression, was it probable that the diatribes of an insignificant little person with shaggy elf-locks and questionable linen should meet with even common courtesy? Curran argued with his junior contrary to his own convictions, striving by forensic imagery to save him from the vortex if he could; declared that nothing but ruin could possibly come of a rising; that the popular cause was hopeless; that the French would possibly make a temporary disturbance to spite perfidious Albion, but that so soon as it should suit their interests, Erin would be blandly restored to the avenger, to reap the reward of her temerity. What sympathy could France have for Ireland? What recked the Directory, or Hoche, or Buonaparte (the clever young general who was becoming celebrated), whether Erin was a slave or not? Other nations as interesting as the Irish were slaves, and would remain so. Just now Hoche was warm upon the subject because he was

jealous of Buonaparte and eager for rival laurels. Granted that he were victorious, he would soon weary of what to him must be a worthless and precarious possession, would carry it to market in a treaty of peace, and surrender it to expiate by yet more grinding servitude the false hopes which were born only to perish. But Mr. Curran (who didn't quite believe all this in his heart of hearts) might as well have talked to the trees in his own Priory orchard.

'You'll be dragged farther than you intend,' he urged. 'Your vanity will induce you to take an active part, and then you'll be punished by the revolting slavery entailed by a mob command.'

It was all in vain. Terence went away, and his chief gave out that he had despatched him on business to Cork.

The unfortunate Orr was hanged, and the result quite pleased the chancellor. A thrill of horror ran through all but the most callous. The oath anent the bough was taken by hundreds in desperation. The toast 'Remember Orr!' became a watchword. People shook their heads, wondering what would come of it. Riots grew more frequent, which were suppressed or not according to caprice. Major Sirr's Battalion of Testimony lived on the fat of the land, for there was no difficulty in unearthing traitors, now that the spirit of recklessness had gone forth. Lord Clare pretended to be pained. The ingratitude and wickedness of his countrymen—their hardened fits of daring—made him blush, he

vowed. The country was in danger, the yeomanry must bestir themselves, England must send regiments too steady to be undermined; if the people were so disgracefully unruly, martial law would have to be proclaimed. He deeply grieved to suggest such a thing, but the majesty of the executive, whose gravest sin was leniency, must at all hazards be respected.

The capital was quite in a fever, shivering as pigeons do in their cote when they feel the electric current. Every one was looking towards France. Was that armament which was assembling at Brest intended for their coasts? If the fleet were to appear in the offing, how would Government behave? It seemed evident enough how they would behave, for troops kept pouring in from England. Hessians, Highlanders, Englishmen, under command of Lord Carhampton, arrived by shiploads, and, spreading over the counties, were placed at free quarters in the cottages. Dublin and the great towns undertook to look to themselves. The armed squireens, yeomanry, fencibles, strutted in scarlet in the streets, clothed in the bully airs which characterise brief authority.

The burning zeal of Orangeism was let loose in all its excess of wildness, and a fanatical orgy commenced—a saturnalia of fiends who acted in the name of religion—which endured for two whole years. Men, who in the past had made themselves objectionable to Government, were not forgotten now. Even the semblance of moderation was tossed

aside. They were delivered to privileged marauders, to be kept under lock and key and ultimately sacrificed in the 'confusion of the times;' whilst as for private enemies, nothing was easier than to charge such an one with treason, and lay him low by purchasing the good offices of an informer. People went openly to the Staghouse, where the 'band of testimony' were kennelled, just as in our modern days they go to Scotland Yard to engage the services of a detective.

In the military mania which revived (how different from the Volunteer movement! the first was an impulse towards good; the latter a carnival of demons), everybody sported a uniform. The Bar chose its special facings, so did the 'prentices, so did the adherents of each opulent grandee. My Lord Powerscourt armed his tenants, but retained them in the hills of Wicklow, declaring that his contingent was not to be made a rabble of aggression. Even the Catholics deemed it prudent to don the red coat in self-defence, as a disguise; and went forth rebel-hunting, sometimes to lay violent hands on their own brethren. But the warriors somehow invariably took the wrong road, or discovered, upon reaching their destination, that gossoons had run forward to give warning. The Right Honourable Claudius Beresford, not to be outdone in zeal, set up a riding-school on Marlborough Green, which later on assumed infamous notoriety as a torture-chamber. Here the yeomen met to try their horses, to accustom them to the sound of drum

and clarion, to break a friendly bottle. Dublin assumed the aspect of a garrison; the country of a vast camp.

Still my lord-chancellor vapoured airily of 'martial law;' not that it signified much practically whether such were declared or no, but it was as well to accustom polite ears to the words before they became legal facts.

The arch-conspirators being unaccountably set free, without any promises having been extorted from them, they naturally set to work at once to take advantage of the general simmering, and the peculiar condition of society was favourable to the attainment of their ends. More than ever now was the anomaly made manifest which has been hinted at before, namely, the promiscuous mixing in convivial intercourse of persons of the most opposite views. At time-serving Arthur Wolfe's, for instance, Clare hobbed and nobbed with the disaffected; such, that is, as had not gone so far as to frighten the well-meaning attorney-general. At Strogue Abbey, again, he chatted quite amicably with Curran, who was never weary of abusing him in Parliament, or strolled in the rosary with Cassidy, who was known to be a United Irishman. But the strangest scene of all was the Beaux-walk in Stephen's Green, more especially on a fine Sabbath, when the *beau monde* appeared in glory. The mall, where carriages paraded, ran at that time along the north side, between a low wall and an impregnable haha, or dyke; and there, on a Sunday afternoon,

might be seen the strangest medley of muslins and chip hats, fine coaches and swinging noddies, mingled with cross-belts and helmets and military plumes and gear; might be heard the wildest diversity of opinions openly broached and bandied. Horse-races took place sometimes as an ostensible reason for the gathering, and none marvelled to behold those who were prisoned traitors a week ago arm in arm with Government officials, or to hear acquaintances joking each other on the inconvenience of getting hanged. Thus it failed specially to shock young Robert as a piece of bad taste, when walking with other undergraduates, if a friend rallied him about his brother's newspaper, and the certain fate which must befall its owner; though it must be admitted that such was not the case with Sara, who moaned and shuddered with dismay, like a rabbit in a den of serpents. Tom Emmett's newspaper was openly published now twice a week, and no one interfered with it, though it sought out the joints of Lord Clare's harness; and the chief of the Directory was weak enough to imagine that his foe had grown afraid of him for his boldness in pointing at injustice. Other newspapers were gagged or bribed; why should his be privileged? Tom Emmett and Bond and the rest held their secret meetings as heretofore, and strolled in the Beaux-walk, and talked treason, like hot-pated Patlanders, to the top of their bent, oblivious of the claw of the cat, because it remained uplifted—poor guileless band of mice! They met frequently and talked

earnestly, and squabbled not a little among themselves, for their opinions were divided on a point—a most important point, upon which unanimity was essential—no less a one than the grand basis of future operations.

Bond and Russell and others argued that misgovernment had come to such a pass, that it might be endured no more without merited disgrace. These bully squireens, these venal, brow-beating grandees, must be shown, before more harm was done, that there must be a bound to their arrogance.

If a tide be bravely stemmed, it will rage awhile; then settle within its limits. Were the French coming? French or no French, the people must rise; observant Europe would applaud, for even unfortunate heroism commands respect and pity; pike-heads by thousands lurked beneath potato plots, pike-poles in myriads were stacked under thatched roofs. Surely the spirit of the ancient kings would animate their sons in this emergency!

Most of the conspirators were for doing something definite at once. Tom Emmett and his brother were in favour of delay.

'We have waited so long,' Tom said, 'that a few weeks more will make little difference, save in the increased exasperation of the people. Lord Clare was obliged by public opinion to set us free. We must do our duty as men. With French assistance success is certain; without it, more than doubtful. Wait, at least, till Terence Crosbie's return—the

young aristocrat who has taken up our cudgels. We shall be none the worse for waiting; and now that he has been baptised into the true cause, his presence will be valuable in our councils. The labourer who entered the vineyard at the last hour was not deprived of his reward. We are terribly weak in military capacity; maybe Heaven, who has awakened so late in the day a scion of a noble house, may point to him as a future leader. Wait at least and see him.'

Young Robert enthusiastically seconded his brother's motion, for his instinctive dread of bloodshed impelled him to postpone the decisive moment; and he was possessed, besides, with a strong belief in Terence, whom he had known intimately during his sojourn at the Priory. Russell and the others obstinately combated the point, urged thereto by youthful jealousy and wounded self-esteem. True, none of the council were of mature years; but to be lectured and prated at by this boy Robert, who was yet a student in Alma Mater, was an indignity which it behoved them to resent.

Doreen, who, after her noteworthy row upon the bay, threw aside the appearance of apathy she had assumed, saw this new danger with concern. Torn well-nigh to death already by factions of many kinds, was Erin to sit by and see her last forlorn hope, her last bodyguard of champions, scattered by the same curse? Miss Wolfe became seized by a frenzy for galloping across country. Her horses were constantly brought back to the stable with

their coats turned, their flanks heaving, their skins reeking with foam.

'No doubt the girl was crazed,' my lady averred, as constantly as she marked the grooming of the animals from her bedroom window-seat. 'Why could she not ride like a well-brought-up young person in the green alleys of the Phœnix, or amble on the mall of Stephen's Green?'

My lady did not know that Doreen met separately, at certain cottages, the different members of the Directory; that she prayed and exhorted each one, as though he were alone to blame, to wisdom and a sacrifice of paltry vanity; and that she came away from each interview with such a dread of impending failure—a distrust of these budding generalissimos—that it required the most reckless gallops, with a dangerous fence or two *en route*, to calm her nerves sufficiently to meet my lady's scrutiny with the accustomed mask of composure on her face.

At the Abbey she had little to complain of now, for all were too busy to take much heed of her. Shane, with a prospect of departing northward, which rumours of accumulating outrages seemed to make more and more urgent, shilly-shallied and delayed, and selected guns and fishing-rods, and invited little knots of Cherokees, and spent more and more time at the Little House, as though the effort to tear himself away from Dublin delights and beloved Norah were too much for his resolution.

Under the circumstances he was not likely to trouble his cousin with attentions; and Doreen breathed freely again so far as her private affairs were concerned, for she perceived that this project of her aunt's was fading into a vision which never would and never could be realised. Any one who watched might see that Shane was desperately smitten with Norah, and Doreen was in no wise jealous. Norah was a nice girl, Doreen determined, who was worthy to become a countess, and she would help to make her happy as much as she could.

My lady's fancies were mere whimsies. If the marriage could be accomplished, she would of course come in time to like her new daughter-in-law. Many domineering old ladies object to eligible maidens, merely because they have not fixed on them themselves.

Miss Wolfe, in her regained independence of thought, felt half inclined to carry it beyond her own concerns, to speak openly to Shane, to go and call on Norah, or meet her as if by chance, and declare that she had come over to the enemy.

But the little love-idyl was destined to an interruption, whether she interfered or not; for Glandore was pledged to go to the north—to tear himself from the arms of metaphoric Capua. Would he remain faithful to his lady-love, when removed from the direct influence of her attractions? The notion of his going, Doreen remembered with a quiet sense of fun, was her own; and selfishly glad she was to have been so inspired, for away at Ennishowen

his thoughts would be diverted into a new channel. Even if he did not learn there to forget Norah, his mind would certainly be freed from vague visions of his absent cousin. Thus she, in any case, would be safe. Situated as the concerns of the patriots were, all her own energies would be needed on the spot—for without some one to threaten and cajole, the bundle was sure to fall to pieces.

She would be glad, therefore, when the establishment at the Abbey should break up, when all the vans and horses and carriages should migrate to Donegal, leaving her—a waif—behind, with nothing to attend to but serious business.

Of course when my lady and her son started for Ennishowen, she would return to her old home in Dublin. She would inhabit once more her little bedroom in Molesworth Street, and would make herself so necessary to her father by fond artful prodigalities of love and tenderness, as to prevent him from ever allowing her to leave him any more. It was all very well, when she was a child, to send her to abide with her aunt, but now she was a woman, and her place was with her father. Then a small inward voice whispered, which caused her heart to beat quick time:

'What if, by my loving influence, I might change at length his views? He is weak, but so kind and excellent; he leans on my aunt because hers is the more masculine nature of the two; and he yearns for support and countenance. Why should he not come to lean on me? My will is as strong as hers

—our mutual affection unstained by a difference, unruffled by a ripple! Oh! if I could persuade him that there are nobler aspirations than mere gathering of gold. That if, instead of money-grubbing to make me a fortune (well-meaning, tender father!) he would spend all he has freely for his country's sake, I would love him all the more dearly for my beggary; what if, by constant dropping on the stone of obstinacy, I could bring him to feel this—how happy, how truly happy, we might come to be together!'

Then, in less exalted moments of reflection, she felt that she deceived herself, that this might never be; that if she elected, in theory, to embrace for a holy cause the vow of poverty in her own person, she had no right to force her convictions upon a man whose glass of life was more than half run out, whose life ran in a groove, and who had so distinct a predilection for flesh-pots. Well, without going to extremes, it would be a joy to guide him just a little, to prevent his truckling too glaringly to Castle influence. If only he were not attorney-general and prosecutor for the Crown! 'When the French expedition shall have arrived,' she thought, 'and swept this wicked Government into the sea, how intense a satisfaction will it be to say to the Irish Directory, "Spare at least my father, for my sake! I have worked heart and soul in the cause; you owe me this boon, the only one I ask of you!'

Certainly, from every point of view it seemed necessary for the young lady to separate herself

from the Abbey and her prejudiced aunt with all speed, and assume her proper place in her own home.

Hence for more reasons than one she looked forward to the forthcoming break in the Abbey *ménage* as to the commencement of a new era of reviving hope and usefulness, and quite longed for Shane's departure with all his bags and baggage.

CHAPTER III.

THE CLOVEN FOOT.

MY lady's preparations were completed at last, and, thanks to her maternal supervision, so were those of her favourite son. Though so close at hand, she went little into Dublin; for the sight of many strange uniforms reminded her of a past time, the associations connected with which she did her best to bury. She knew only, therefore, by rumour what was passing—by the reports of the *Gazette*, by conversations with Lord Clare. As for Curran, there was nothing to be got from him. He was as surly and morose as possible; said rude things about the Orange Societies; told her details of atrocities which, she felt sure, must be exaggerated; quarrelled with her about the scarlet woman; showed signs of becoming as bigoted on one side as she half admitted herself to be on the other.

She grew almost reconciled to the necessity of going northwards, for Shane's conduct gave her serious alarm. He almost lived at the Little House, and she saw the possibility, if the journey were delayed much longer, of his declining to go at all. For all Norah's influence was evidently thrown into the scale against her, and she bitterly regretted now having shot off that arrow at Crow Street.

The artful damsel was striving to instil into her lover's mind that it was cowardly to go away at this juncture; and it was only by pretending to have private intelligence from the chancellor that his mother could soothe his *amour propre* to sleep.

She was credibly informed, so she declared, that Paris spies had told Dublin spies, who had whispered it at the Castle, that the French fleet would certainly make for the north. It stood to reason they would not sail into Cork Harbour or Dublin Bay, where their foe was ready to receive them. Not a bit of it. They would make for the lonely, rock-bound coast of Donegal or Antrim, and young Lord Glandore would cover himself with glory by appearing at the head of the yeomanry in the neighbourhood to harass the landing of the troops.

This was just such a wild idea as suited the youthful fire-eater. He saw, in his mind's eye, the shattered vessels on his iron rocks of Ennishowen; a feeble resistance and surrender—for a mere handful could do anything on those cliffs—and gave way, as usual, to his mother. But she felt that, if

they were to go, they must be off as speedily as possible, or even her influence would fail at the last moment, and that which she most dreaded might take place, despite her efforts.

Her indignation against the lady of the Little House knew no bounds. That she should immolate her own daughter for the mean purpose of revenging herself upon a rival, was too horrible! It was really amazing to consider what these Catholics were capable of! They had no consciences. They were ready to commit any enormity, because when it was done they could go to confession, wipe the stain off the slate, and come back smiling. Lord Clare was perfectly right about the scarlet woman, and Mr. Curran in his dotage. For every sort of reason these Catholics must be kept down. No punishment was bad enough for them—they should be locked in cages like wild beasts—they were absolutely incorrigible—at least, so thought the Swaddler. Doreen was turning out abominably. If she too were not soon caged, she would be running off some day with a groom—or a United Irishman, which was worse, breaking her father's heart, and dragging his name through the mire. She preached to her brother on this subject, making him very uneasy, and gave up looking after her poor, lest, meeting Mrs. Gillin, she might forget herself.

Her preparations were complete, yet still she lingered at the Abbey. Society was in such a state of suspense that freedom of action seemed para-

lysed. The lady-lieutenant was frightened, and talked of fleeing to London, yet she delayed her journey. The mall and the Beaux-walk were both as full as ever. People went thither in hopes of decided news one way or other—which never came; and being there, they rode and gossiped and joked, because it was the habit to do so.

Emmett and his friends were becoming grievously troubled, for the split in their camp widened daily. Were the French playing with their Irish allies? This continued inaction on their part was incomprehensible; for summer had faded to autumn, autumn was shrivelling into winter—it was almost too late to expect assistance now. Must the effort be postponed till next year? or a forlorn hope be attempted single-handed? To make it now would be madness, for rains were pouring down with Hibernian vehemence—the country was sodden—would soon be frozen—the exposed patriots would die off like rotten sheep. To wait till next year was a bad prospect—who can calculate what may happen in six months? The evil acts of the executive were piling up with terrible velocity. A sense of treachery and of dismay seemed to hang over the capital, for none could be certain who had taken the oath and who had not. Fathers were known to be loyalists whose sons had received the tonsure. Peasant mothers had put pikes in hiding whose daughters were living with the soldiers. Friends met and dined, and laughed with each other about the wide divergence of their views, just as they had

done for some time past; but the feeling that though they differed their friendship would not wane was beginning to be shaken, for Major Sirr and his sinister band were abroad. No one was safe from the informer.

There was a dinner-party at the Abbey—a party of typical incongruity. The chancellor was there, all smiles and airiness. Mr. Curran was there, who was becoming strangely absent and sour; his little primrose Sara too, who looked delicate and nervous, and shrank, as if in pain, from conversation, which of course turned on politics. Cassidy was there too, in humble attendance on Doreen; and young Robert Emmett, whom the chancellor condescended to twit scornfully on his behaviour.

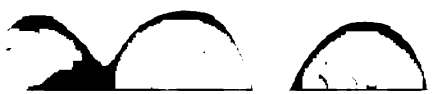
'Keep your head out of the noose, my dear young friend!' he said. 'No one is so small as to escape the vigilant eye of a paternal government. Do you suppose we are not informed of your pratings within Trinity? Your bursts of baby-eloquence, which are flowery but foolish? It is a harmless amusement possibly within those aged walls, and the wild talk of undergraduates is of little moment, yet I warn you that it will not be permitted much longer. Oh dear no! We won't do you the honour of arresting you. That would give you too much importance. But it may become my painful duty, as chancellor of that university as well as of this realm, to erase your name with others from its books, unless you mend your manners—that's all; so be warned and wise in time.

Robert chafed and choked at such language as this, which seemed to mark him for a schoolboy before his wistful love; but he stood in such awe of the stately dowager that he only reddened and hung his head. Then Lord Clare, feeling merry, felt disposed to break a lance with his ancient enemy of the Bar; he therefore gaily asked if he might take a glass with Colonel Curran of the Lawyer's Corps—whose military skill would soon be brought into play, considering that the paternal Government had decided at last to propose a suspension of Habeas Corpus. The United Irishmen were behaving so badly—were declaiming in so provoking a fashion about their bonds, that it was as well to show them for a moment what slavery really meant. But this pleasant little sally fell dismally flat; for Curran was already aware of this dreadful resolve, and did not rise in vehement expostulation, as the other expected. So had Doreen heard of it. Her eye brightened a little, but her hand never shook as she leisurely peeled a peach.

When the news had first gone forth, she had ridden over to the Priory, lest haply some one might be there who could advise what might best be done. She found Curran on his doorstep, putting on his gloves.

'I knew they'd do it,' was all he said to her. 'You stop here till I return. I am going to Mr. Grattan.'

Presently he came cantering back on his shaggy pony, and said to the anxious girl:



'There is nothing for it but patience. Mr. Grattan expected this, and so did I. We shall oppose the bill, but that will make no difference. This wretched land is doomed. If the bill is carried, Mr. Grattan will retire from parliament, and so shall I. We are both sick of the murderous farce.' Then, drumming his fingers on the window, in an attempt to keep down his agitation, he muttered forth at intervals: 'Habeas Corpus! the very last guardian of our liberties! They'll bring in the knife when every one's asleep, and stab our guardian in the dark!'

So the lawyer—not taken unawares—only smiled, and, bowing stiffly over his glass, asked quietly:

'Did you ever read Æschylus, my lord? I know you are a fine scholar. You always remind me of Mercury in "Prometheus Vinctus," who was constantly abusing the poor martyr for howling, when his only grievance was a stake of adamant through his breast!'

The party broke up early, as both of the elder gentlemen were due at the House, and the social atmosphere was stormy. My Lord Clare whispered to his old friend at starting that he would call round in the morning, as he had something very particular to say to her. Doreen took the opportunity of imploring Curran to send a message to the shebeen, with intelligence as to the fate of the bill (care of red-polled Biddy), that she might know from him what happened with as small a delay as possible.

That astute person turned out but too true a

prophet. The bill which was to close the courts of law, and place power over life and property in the hands of military despots (and such despots!), was shuffled into the House by the attorney-general at 2 a.m., and read for the second time after *grave and mature deliberation* at 2.10 a.m.; and Doreen, when she read the note which informed her that it was carried by 137 against 7, had an extra douche of sorrow poured over her, in that her too facile parent had been its godfather!

So martial law was declared, and the humane and benignant soldiery, whose good feeling had already been proven at Armagh and elsewhere, were to work their wicked will unrestrained. Doreen was too much upset to appear at breakfast, so my lady picnicked alone on the window-seat which looked upon the stable-yard, watching for her vagrant darling, keeping a keen look-out, too, as to whether her niece went out for a scamper. For my lady had passed a sleepless night—one of those terrible *nuits blanches* much worse than any nightmare—when all our sins sit heavy on our chests; when our brains throb to bursting, and we hope there is no hereafter. She tossed—listening for Shane's return—growing more feverish as hour after hour passed silently. Still at the Little House! This was maddening. The vision of Shane and Norah arriving to throw themselves upon their knees, danced before her eyes. Once or twice, when sinking into a doze, she sat up with a start, clutching the luxuriant braids of white hair which gave her in her looking-glass such an odd look of winter and autumn united.

Manfully she had quelled any shrinking on her own account about returning to Ennishowen. To her who had borne so much, what mattered a little extra suffering? It was excellent advice that her niece had given her. The way, and the only way, out of the labyrinth was to transfer the establishment *en bloc;* she had recognised the fact, and had resolved, for her dear boy's sake, not to spare herself. But now, in dead of night, when the past stood out in phosphorescent light, and the future loomed even yet more ghastly, she had to fight the old weary moral fight again, in which she had so frequently been worsted. Again she saw her husband on that bed of chairs at Daly's. Again she heard him say, ere the last rattle stopped his voice for ever, 'Make right that wrong while there is time!' Again she welled over with impotent rage, whimsically mixed with penitence, in that she must wear the Nessus shirt which he had shuffled off long since. She realised, as she ruminated, that she had been deceiving herself as to the motives which kept her still at Strogue. It was a terror of the island of Glas-aitch-é at Ennishowen—of the tales which each twig and shrub would tell her there—of the songs which the waves would sing to her as they dashed against the cliffs —which had really delayed her starting. But there must be an end of this weakness. All was ready. For Shane's sake she would like to start upon the morrow, for the sooner she drank her dose the better; but, unfortunately, a promise had been given to attend their excellencies at a great ball

which was to take place at the Castle—and to retire suddenly, in ticklish times like these, would certainly be construed as big with political import. But after all, this fête (which was to show the scum that their betters did not fear them) would be past in a few days. Till that time arrived my lady would continue to wait; but in order to underline for herself in her midnight self-communing the determination that there was to be no more cowardice, she then and there resolved that the great coach should take them upon the very same evening within the Castle-yard, and spirit them forward on their way, instead of making a fresh start from the Abbey on the morrow. This resolution being come to, my lady's mind became calmer. As the blue light of wintry morning struggled in she felt quite relieved, and got up presently—as imperious as usual—to await Lord Clare's communication, and watch the stable-yard for Shane's return.

It was fully eleven o'clock before Lord Clare's carriage wheezed up the avenue—the casket which held Ireland's great man. For once Doreen had not bucketed forth on one of her wild rides. Shane had not yet come in.

My lady swept out upon the narrow terrace in front of the hall-door to receive her guest. He must stand in need of refreshment; what would he please to take?

He would take nothing for the moment. Yes—he would. It was a strange conceit in one who had visited there as a familiar gossip during so many

years. He would take a view of Strogue Abbey—he would be shown over the mansion by its chatelaine. My lady was surprised. Indeed, she had not been over the quaint place herself for ages. What did my Lord Clare desire to see? Was it the dungeon? or the ancient kitchen and buttery, with its black woodwork, or the water-tower?

He would see everything while he was about it, he said. In the first instance the young men's wing, with its museum of fishing-rods and guns—and—what was that over it—an armoury? Oh, indeed! he would like to look at it.

'But perchance I should disturb the young gentlemen,' her guest said with hesitation. 'By-the-bye, has your son gone out?'

To Lord Clare's genuine astonishment, my lady reddened and looked away. Could she know the mission on which he had come? If so, then she was a greater mistress of her face than he supposed. If not, what troubled her? He forgot that shrined in her love there was but one son. That while he was hinting of the second, she, with sorrow, was thinking of the first—who was dallying—where?

The twain wandered in the young men's rooms—in Shane's, whose bed was smooth and neat—in Terence's, where faithful Phil was sitting, deeply engrossed in fly-making, as innocently as if he had never heard of a bough in England's crown.

'Both boys out, then? so much the better,' gaily quoth the chancellor, who chose for a moment to ignore Terence's mysterious absence. 'I hope

Terence is safe; I can assure you Shane is; I saw him not an hour since. He roystered with the Blasters all night, and of course had to fight a duel in the morning. Is not the motto of their gay society "Nemo me impune lacessit"? But he didn't get a scratch—indeed he's a splendid swordsman—such a tactician—so sharp and quick of eye! I must really congratulate him when he comes in by-and-by. Those spiral stairs? Ah! That's the armoury.'

Phil dropped his flies, and leapt up from his seat. My lady and her guest, taking no heed of him, climbed upward, opened the armoury-door, went in and shut it. He could hear the creaking of their feet above. What could he do? Nothing! He sank panting on his seat, bewildered—then, stealing out, made the best of his way to the shebeen.

'By-the-bye, where is Terence?' asked Lord Clare. 'You don't know? I do. My poor old friend, prepare yourself for a shock. Sit down.'

With a gentleness which would have astonished his numerous enemies, the chancellor laid his two hands on my lady's shoulders and pressed her into a seat. The pupils of her eyes assumed that look, as of a startled hare, which shone in them sometimes. She sat down silently and waited.

Had Terence been guilty of something base? That was her first thought, in which there was a touch of remorse. Then came a feeling of anger in that he existed at all. Oh that he had never been born, or had died in his early childhood! This in its turn was followed by intense self-loathing; but

her face remained immovable, while she looked up with inquiring gaze.

'I have most unpleasant news for you,' said Lord Clare kindly, for he liked my lady better than any one except himself, 'and thought it would come best to you from me. For we'll hush the matter up—rest easy on that score, trusting that no worse may come of it. Terence, as you know, was rude to me at Crow Street, t'other day. I didn't mind his petulance, of course; but for your sake I was hurt that he should have gone astray and made an exhibition of himself in public. It's your rough diamond Curran's fault, with his romantic balderdash about his country. He threw the young man into dangerous society, forgetting that it takes a seasoned head to weigh the hollowness of enthusiasm. Terence has been bitten by the prevailing rabies; the fever's hot upon him, and being of a higher breed than his companions, has rushed straightway into action, instead of merely prating like the others. As his mother, you should have greater influence over him than any one. Argue him out of his dangerous course. You think he's at Cork on law business? He's strutting up and down the landing-stage at Brest, with Tone and Hoche, and all the rest of the jays in peacock-plumes. He's urging the bevy of juvenile generals there to come across the water, despite the lateness of the season; in fact, he's beginning the risky game which brought Balmerino, Kilmarnock, Lovat, to the block. I'm sure of what I state—trust me for that. Why!

these hot-pated fools do nothing that we're not informed of; and Mr. Pitt's staff in France is every whit as sharp as ours here. Do you desire a proof that I speak with authority? What are these things stacked here, under these cloths, within these presses, even piled, as you see, right up the chimney!' Lord Clare moved about the room with the precision of one who is sure of what he does. 'Pikeheads, my lady—rough but efficient—which are to rip his Majesty's soldiers when the struggle shall begin. It was an ingenious notion to store them under the roof of a known loyalist. Who placed them here? Your ingenuous boy, Terence, with the assistance of the people at the shebeen below. That "Irish Slave," by the way, must have a visit from us; also the fair dame on whose ground it stands. Look at this paper. A design for a pikehead, precisely like these, with written directions—in whose hand? Terence's! I gave five hundred guineas for that piece of paper. See! do not tremble—it's destroyed—the evidence is gone.'

My lady sat upright in her chair without moving, staring up at the speaker, scarcely comprehending what he said, through the singing in her ears. Terence, her son, had actually joined the disaffected—these deluded persons whose proceedings shocked all her prejudices—whom she sincerely believed were only fit for Bedlam. He might come to an ignominious death unless she put forth all her influence to drag him from the danger. What influence could she expect to have? Whose fault was it

that she had none? Her sin was finding her out in an unexpected fashion. A great cry rose up within her, that her fortitude was near its end. It broke from her bosom in a sigh of weariness. She looked old and haggard as she stared up at the chancellor. Her ancient friends poke of the situation: of how the commander-in-chief my Lord Carhampton must inaugurate a new régime, now that martial law was declared; of how, all things considered, in the complications which were arising, it would be wise for the denizens of the Abbey to depart shortly. Terence might be expected back in a day or two; then his mother must speak to him and take him with her if she could. It would be well to take Miss Wolfe away too, as she was playing the fool most egregiously. She, too, had a hand in this pike-stacking.

My Lord Clare laughed in his disagreeable manner as he recounted how he had succeeded in terrifying poor vacillating Arthur Wolfe about her. At all events it was most wise that Lord Glandore should go; for it would be a terrible thing—supposing Terence proved obstinate—if the brothers should come to be in rival camps upon the scene of action.

'My dear lady,' he concluded, 'we shall have a hot time of it before we've done, I do assure you. Take your measures as I advise. Now I must be off to turn the screw upon the "Irish Slave."'

The coach rolled citywards. My lady, face to face

with a new trouble, clung to the one speck of brightness which glittered like a star. Gillin certainly was committing herself. There was to be a search upon her premises. Her ruin would surely follow. The pressure from that side would be removed. Thank heaven for that! Yes! This was a real ray of light shining from out the gloom. Things at their worst must mend. With firm step the countess swept along the passages, striving to stifle the remorse which whispered that if evil came to Terence, she would be responsible. She would follow her friend's sage advice to the letter, she determined. It was time to do battle with Doreen, as to her proposed visit to the north.

Miss Wolfe was bending over the sun-dial in her little flower-plot, which was sad-looking with quaint-toned chrysanthemums, her head bowed upon her arms—a statue of despair. An open letter lay crumpled at her feet. My lady saw it and smiled grimly. Indeed, the poor maiden had received a terrible blow—one heavy enough to stagger even her firmly-knit nature. The beauteous *Château en Irlande*, which she had been so busy building, had come crashing down. Its gargoyles and turrets were admirable to behold—but, alas! its foundations were of sand. It had toppled bodily upon her head, and she was stunned by the completeness of the ruin. Her fond parent had indited her a note bidding her pack up her clothes; for, that she might be removed from danger, she was to go to Glas-aitch-é with her aunt.

She was caught in her own trap. Those dainty visions of returning to her father, of weaning him from the flesh-pots, of bolstering him up in the buckram of her love against his weak sensual self, were vanished. 'She was to be taken away out of danger,' her cruel father wrote, as though she did not pant for danger as doth the war-horse! The misfortunes which might result from this unlooked-for arrangement rose up before her one by one, each armed with its separate shiver. The struggle would come. She, whose heart was wrapped in it —who had made up her mind in which direction duty lay—would be a prisoner far away in a desert island, to which news would trickle slowly: that was bad enough. But of late she had become morbidly anxious, on account of the disorganisation which delay was causing among the United Irishmen. It was only by her own personal influence that Russell and Bond had bowed to Tom Emmett's dictum, and consented to await Terence's return. Were the French coming, or were they not? If not, would the society fling down the gauntlet alone? If it should do so, what would be the result? Would Emmett continue to carry his point as to delay? If he failed in his endeavours, what could be expected to take place? Even if he should be able to control the unruly, how fraught with danger was the prospect. Help from France was the willow that bound the sticks; that band removed, with what ease might each separately be broken!

At sound of my lady's footstep, Doreen started

from her crouching attitude. Her aunt's were the last eyes on earth which she would wish to pry into her despair. She was vaguely suspicious too that her aunt's wild projects of matrimony had something to do with this last arrangement. It was, beside the others, a mild phase of annoyance no doubt, but it certainly was annoying to consider that in Donegal she would find herself shut up well-nigh alone with Shane, who, urged by his mother, might tease her dreadfully. Taken altogether, her future looked black as Styx. She promised herself to make one effort more to remain behind in Dublin. Then it flashed upon her that perchance some one had warned her father of the prominence which she had assumed of late. Yet who would tell him? Her precautions were always well taken. In public she acted with extreme reserve towards Tom Emmett and the rest. Private interviews had always been held at obscure cottages, whose owners she knew would be hanged ere they betrayed her. There was no doubt though, she reflected with sore foreboding, that there were traitors somewhere. If only they could be unmasked. Well, well! time unravels many tangles.

'I see your father has written to you,' my lady said, stepping down into the garden. 'He must even defend you against yourself. Upon my word, the Irish are all insane. I shall have the honour to be your keeper for awhile—in a most impregnable asylum.'

Then it was her aunt who had suggested this

step. At this instant how bitterly she hated her!

'I have yet to learn,' she said with hauteur, 'what business you have to interfere with me. I am of age, and not your daughter.'

'You will not presume to disobey your father, I suppose?' the countess inquired coldly. 'Though I ought rather to be surprised if for once you are dutiful.'

'My duty is to my mother's people!' Doreen murmured absently.

'I told you once before,' her aunt went on, unheeding, 'that you would disgrace the family and break your father's heart. For both reasons it is my distinct business to interfere with you. The friends whom you have chosen to make, are rushing like sheep to the slaughter. You shall not be one of the flock if I can help it. I have spoken gravely to your father about you; and so has some one else—Lord Clare.'

'Lord Clare!' echoed Doreen, astonished. 'What does he know about me?'

'Too much,' retorted her aunt, dryly. 'He showed me, just now, a delectable sight in the armoury, a discovery which cost him five hundred guineas. For shame! It is kindness to deem you mad.'

'How did he know of the pikes?' startled Doreen inquired.

'Through Terence,' replied my lady, shortly—for she knew not how much or how little her niece and

son were mixed up in this affair, and always instinctively avoided talking of the latter to the former. There was a long pause, during which the dowager continued to eye her niece.

'Aunt, I will go with you to Donegal!' Miss Wolfe said slowly, her large eyes peering with vague terror into space. 'I think now I will take a walk, for I am rather upset;' and quietly taking her garden-hat from the bench hard-by, she knotted its ribbons under her chin, and disappeared between the beech hedges of the rosary.

There are moments in most lives when so sharp a pang shoots through our hearts, that we feel there is nothing left but to seek a remote covert and wait for death. Such strokes age us suddenly and surely. To few is it given to become old by slow and imperceptible steps. We remain in the solitude of our covert without speech; almost without feeling. Presently we perceive that we were mistaken about death (for the White Pilgrim comes not for the bidding); and emerge into the world again, apparently the same as before—young outwardly, and smooth-browed, but really altogether different. Poets have sung much of broken hearts, at which cynics have scoffed, time out of mind. Hearts have broken under a sudden mental shock, but seldom. They are more usually turned inside out and changed.

Doreen had just received such a shock as calls imperatively for solitude. Then the snake in the grass—the Judas—was Terence—her own cousin!

Rapidly she walked through the rosary, and out by the wooden gate into the open—away—inland across the fields, for miles.

She was surprised to find that she felt more grieved than was at all necessary, in that the snake was Terence. Only a few minutes ago she had been praying heaven to unmask the villain, with the laudable intention of pointing him out to the reprobation and contempt of the society. But Terence! The open-visaged, careless youth who exasperated her, as a woman, chiefly because he was prodigal of promise which was not likely to be fulfilled. He had been so importunate in blundering puppy fashion (really almost as ridiculous as Cassidy), heaving absurd sighs, carrying on his intermittent wooing in so ludicrously naïve a manner, as to provoke scorn in so high-spirited a mistress. Looking within herself, she discovered that behind her light estimate of his amatory ravings there was a genuine liking for the lad. Could she have been entirely mistaken in him? Could her judgment have been utterly at fault when she decided, that if feebly endowed by nature, he was at least honest and true? For the more she considered the subject as she trudged across country, the more she felt that it would be indeed grievous if that fine open face, which had looked so noble in its indignation on account of the martyr Orr, should turn out to be only a grinning mask.

Terence the Judas—the betrayer of the innocent—the snarer of the unwary! Terence, her cousin,

whose jocund visage she admitted to be rather dear to her. If he proved so base a scoundrel, in whom then might an earnest soul place trust? Was his perfidy a fall, or original sin? She remembered how she had read wise thoughts in books, wherein sages had explained that our nature is unstable, liable to trip—that none can resist temptation if clothed in the fittest garb. Is not the prayer which should be oftenest on our lips, 'Lead us not, O God, into temptation?' Women are perverse, choosing always the left one, when they ought to take the right turning; and with the perversity of women Doreen chose at once to accept the most distasteful phase of the situation. She took it for granted that Terence was in the wrong, instead of more prudently suspending her judgment till his return from France.

The feet of her cousin were cloven. He wore a tail and smelt of brimstone. She stood still beside a paling as she thought of him, and shook it in a rage with both her hands, while a vague feeling of uneasiness came over her in that she should care so much that Terence should prove the Judas. Yet was she not quite justified in her dismay? Was it not natural that her faith in truth and goodness should be thrown out of gear by such low calculating turpitude? Clutching the gnarled paling, the unhappy lady bowed her face on it and burst into sobs which shook her to the centre.

Five hundred guineas! That was the sharpest of the many thongs which smote her. She had

declined to look at the sordid motive—it was so very mean and vile. But now it clamoured with open palms at the gates of her brain, and shouted deafeningly. Vulgar money troubles are at the bottom of everything that's base! What a pity that there should be such a thing as money! Five hundred guineas! How small—how miserable a sum! He was always in debt, she knew: to such easy-going creatures as he always seemed to be, debt was a state of nature. But could he have sunk so low as this? Was he capable, for five hundred guineas, of suddenly assuming a noble love of motherland, which was a farce—of laying a gin for the feet of persons who had never injured him—nay, whom he reckoned among his dearest friends? For the wretched price of five hundred guineas, could he look her—his cousin, almost his sister—in the face, and endeavour to steal her heart, that he might stick it on a pole for the amusement of fellow-traitors? Traitor! Arch-traitor—wretch! Tears having come to her relief, Doreen sat on the grass and wept, and felt like the wounded beast within the covert.

Piecing scraps together, with the key which my lady had furnished, many cloudy matters became clear. My lady was proud and prejudiced, but her pride revolted against treachery. If not, why had she suddenly warned her niece to see that her correspondence was not tampered with? Who should tamper with it? Not Jug, or Biddy, or Phil. They were children of the soil, who knew not treachery.

How could my lady know of any tampering of theirs? No! It was against Terence — the son whom my lady loved not—whose unworthy proceedings filled her aristocratic soul with repugnance —that she had warned her niece. Lord Clare knew the very wording of Theobald's last letter—through whom? Through Terence, of course—for five hundred guineas—alas! alas!

All of a sudden a new idea struck Doreen, and she sat up, her cheeks blanched and tear-stained. The traitor had worked well for the degrading pittance. He had succeeded in hoodwinking the society as well as herself. He was now at Brest, with every secret in his possession—every detail—every aspiration—cut and dried—in cold black and white—and she it was who had despatched him. The Emmetts, Russell, Bond, were doomed men. Their young lives were unconsciously sacrificed by her. There was no end to the blood for which she would be answerable. The cycle of her frenzied thoughts came back to the point at which she started. She had been trifling like some innocent child with burning brands which had scorched her. Not herself alone. Her life was her own, for better or for worse. When she should be called to appear before the throne to account for her deeds, she would be asked, 'Why broke you your father's heart for a chimera? why did you lead Emmett, Russell, Bond, by your wiles to the scaffold? Who were you to set yourself up as a teacher? To lure honest men, like a siren, to destruction? What could her

faltering answer be? I meant well. I acted for the best. I was presumptuous. I am sorry. . . . Can regret undo the injuries which are due to our presumption? No. The wretched Doreen was crushed by an overwhelming sense of her own littleness and failure. There was nothing for it but to kneel down and cry, 'I have sinned;' to clasp her sorrow and take it to the north, there to hold vigils of unfruitful repentance, whilst praying humbly to be released from earth. The wilds of Glas-aitch-é should be her covert. Into it she would creep like a stricken doe. If the White Pilgrim would obey her summons, with what gratitude she would cling to his filmy raiment! If he refused to hearken to her pleading—why then she must, kneeling on the stones, endure unto the end with such meekness as a vengeful heaven might vouchsafe to her.

The wild paroxysm past, she got up and returned with trailing feet towards the Abbey. Her limbs were aching from contact with dank herbage: her brogues and stockings soiled with clinging mud. A drizzling veil was settling on the earth, which looked, as far as ken might reach, dun-toned and colourless. Raising dazed eyes, she beheld a slim figure moving with rapid strides, and recognised young Robert from afar.

What could he be doing? Was he also crushed in spirit, as weary of the world as she; wandering in search of peace? or on one of his many missions of private charity?

He had been to the Abbey in quest of her; was told by a garden-lad that she had passed through the wooden postern, and had tracked her wanderings from hut to hut.

'They are going too far!' he said abruptly, with bent brows, as he turned to walk back with her. 'Already the squireens are abroad, imitating their fellows in the north. Dublin's in a ferment. It needs but the coming of the French to settle the affair at a blow. Every magistrate has received orders to raise twenty men to preserve the peace in place of the militia, should these be ordered to the coast. But they overreach themselves. Decent people are so furious at the tactics of Lord Clare, that even the militia are dying to turn against the Government. Cassidy says so, who should know, seeing that he keeps up a friendship with the Castle. I speak to-night at the Debating Club. Look at these notes,' he added, smiling. '"Recipe to make a Rebel! Take one loyal subject uninfluenced by pension; burn his house over his head; murder his wife and babes before his eyes; march away with such plunder as you choose to save from the flames——" But what is the matter? You look ill!'

'I am leaving Dublin almost at once,' Doreen said, 'and am glad of it. If there is one power which has the gift of withering up the soul, it is treachery! I am sick of the world. Go to your brother. Tell him the cause is lost. One who held all their secrets has betrayed them—for five hundred guineas; that is their value in his eyes.'

Here the girl broke into wild laughter—she who never laughed; and Robert looked at her in surprise, with a sense of coldness, creeping. Then, with a hectic spot upon each cheek, she eased her breast with words; recounted all she knew, and much more which was conjecture, though in her perturbed state she was not aware of it. Explained that they were all dupes of Terence's false *bonhomie*—that he had coldly and deliberately played a part; had, as it were, eaten their bread and salt, and then stabbed them in the back. In the midst of the hideous recital, her voice choked in a great gulp, and clasping her hot face with her hands, she burst into a flood of tears.

Ardent young Robert was shocked, but not convinced. Terence! whom every one loved for his bright eyes, through which shone forth an honest soul. To whom Robert and fellow-undergraduates looked up as to a *preux chevalier* in the matter of grouse-shooting and the beguiling of the wily trout. He could not believe such a thing, and would not. Lord Clare was capable of any amount of lying. His ways were so tortuous that they were difficult to follow. His spies were legion, who ferreted out everything. No doubt Phil and Biddy had been watched; they had billed and cooed too loudly as they had handed the pikes over the wall. Terence was unduly heedless about money; his friends frequently declared that he didn't know its value. It was absolutely out of the question that he should suddenly be tempted to do so crafty and

mean a thing. As for the delegates of the society being betrayed and their secrets known, there was nothing new in that. Had they not, months ago, been arrested at his own chambers, their papers seized, themselves arbitrarily imprisoned, and afterwards as arbitrarily released? He could not fathom the tactics of the executive, the youth was forced to confess, for their movements seemed planned to circumvent each other. The rank and file were being captured by dozens and hanged, while the commanders and organisers of the scheme were permitted to remain at large.

It was not unpleasing to Doreen to hear her cousin defended; but she shook her head.

'If the French were to come now,' she said, 'they might set things right; but then they must come in force; and Terence, having gone to Brest, would probably clinch the irresolution of Hoche, and effectually decide him not to come at all. Verily, the world and its affairs were vexation of spirit; conspiracy a disheartening game; Ireland an accursed land, foredoomed to eternal misery.'

By the wooden postern which gave access to the rosary, stood a group of peasants, who humbly bowed to Miss Wolfe, then returned to the dirge of lamentation which her appearance had interrupted.

'Jug Coyle, what is the matter?' Doreen inquired; for she recognised in a heaving heap before her the shattered remains of that lady.

'Whisht! acushla!' a man whispered. 'Let her tears flow. Sure she's burned out of house and

home. Her cabin's desthroyed. The sodgers—bad luck to 'em!—have taken her bit of bacon and the dhrop of potteen the quality used to loike, and thin they began to turn up the pratey-garden, and Biddy gave a yelp and wanted to run to the Little House, but the blagyards gagged her mouth with an ould rag, and tuk her away screeching.'

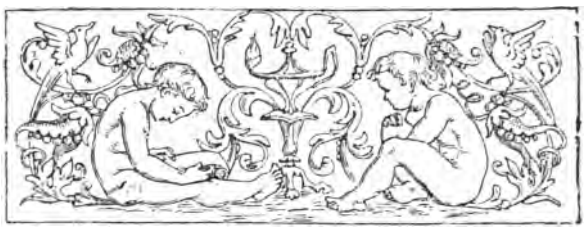
'The "Irish Slave" destroyed?' inquired Robert.

'Yes, your honour,' replied the man, lowering his voice as he glanced around. 'But they didn't find much. Phil, Masther Terence's man, came down from the Abbey to give the office, and most of the pike-heads were tossed over the wall, till we can put 'em back to-night. Wake up, Jug, and spake with the lady. Sure the shock has druv the collough crazy. When the thatch was all ablaze we went up to Madam Gillin, who always has the kind word and bit and sup; but she said she could do nothing, and bade us come to you.'

'To me!' echoed Doreen, bitterly. 'Am I not too a Catholic, and helpless?'

'But it's your father's the great gintleman,' urged the fellow coaxingly, as he twisted his corbeen between his horny hands. 'If ye'd spake the word, acushla——'

'My father!' Doreen groaned, breaking abruptly through the knot of suppliants. 'What can he do? He is sending me away. I'll pray to God for you; but He has been deaf this long while.'



CHAPTER IV.

WE PIPED UNTO YOU.

SO the "Irish Slave" was destroyed by fire, and its hapless occupant, finding that no redress might be obtained through Miss Wolfe, crawled to the Little House, where she was taken in by its kind mistress, who in her turn received, a few minutes later, a visit from Major Sirr. He pointed out with deferential politeness to the good-humoured dame that, as a Catholic possessing property, it was scarcely wise to harbour traitors, whereat the stout lady broke into her hearty laugh and invited him to lunch.

'Is it me, meejor, that causes the Secret Council to shiver in their shoes,' she asked, 'with a Protestant daughter to go bail for me, and meeself, all but the fine airs, an aristocrat? Not but what Ollam Fodlah, mee ancestor, was better than the best of the stuck-up crathers! I'm a "no-party woman," as all the world knows, just as the buck-ramed bag-o'-bones at the Abbey foreninst us is a

"no-popery woman." Let my ould collough be; she was my nurse, and won't trouble any one for long. Come in. Ye shall taste a gulp of my fine claret just to show there's no spite betune us—the very same, on my word of honour, as Justice Carleton and Judge Clonmel have such a tooth for.'

And Major Sirr pledged his hostess in his best manner, with a smirk on his thin features and a worldly twinkle glimmering from under his bushy brows, and departed presently to report at the Castle that Madam Gillin was a staunch loyalist who had miraculously escaped the taint which poisoned most ladies of her creed.

When he had departed, the good lady's face lost its dimples and grew long.

'That wicked fellow will bring them all to the gallows,' she muttered to herself, frowning at some one she saw in her mind's eye who was not Major Sirr. 'And my lips are sealed! It's a fearsome thing to have to watch what's going on, and not dare speak a word of warning. If he only didn't know that I take Norah to the mass! Yet I'm bound to do my best for the child's soul, though my lord would have her brought up a Protestant. Sure Father Daly said I must bring the pet to chapel for her soul's sake as well as mine.'

Then Madam Gillin, who was dividing the sheep from the goats in the matter of faded frippery in an untidy cupboard, resigned herself to unwonted meditation, with lines of gravity about her mouth which seldom rested there, as she recalled the day

some time since, when he whom she had looked upon as friend unveiled himself to her in drunken frenzy as a viper; when she had stared into his big jolly face with an expression that had sobered him, while he explained that for the future she must do as she was bidden, or else all sorts of penalties would swoop upon her for tampering with the religion of a Protestant. On that occasion he fairly terrified her, and she kept the secret as to his being a viper in disguise, though it sickened her to think of it o' nights. She recalled the scene now for the thousandth time, and shuddered; and her best frock slipped out of her hands on the dirty floor while she contemplated that genial pleasant boon companion as she and only a few others knew him. Norah found her standing absently among crumpled gauzes when she returned from a jaunt to Dublin, and rallied her mother on her looks, with a smacking kiss like a whip-crack.

'Have ye heard a banshee, mamma?' she asked. 'See! I've done all the commissions. Feathers a foot long, lovely flowers for our skirts, and gloves to cover the elbow. I met Shane upon the road, and we went together; but I could not wheedle him into coming to the ball, though I did my best. He said the grand ladies frightened him—bored him more likely. He's mighty timid for a Blaster. It's a wonder he's not afraid of *me*.'

As the girl surveyed herself archly in the glass, she perceived why her lover feared her not. Indeed there was little of the grand style about the colleen.

A rosy cheek; a liquid merry eye; a large ripe mouth, and an impudent upturned nose. No classical belle was poor Norah—only a healthy, comely wench—just such an one as would be likely to enchain a man with no loftier aspirations than Glandore's.

Though mamma was inclined to be glum, her daughter was in the highest spirits; for before her was the delicious prospect of the ball (such gaieties were becoming rarer and more rare), and she was quite convinced, from what Shane had said, that that spiteful cat the countess had lied when conversing at Crow Street with Lady Camden. It was true, certainly, that he was going away for a few weeks. It appeared that he had duties to perform, and she liked him too well to stand in the way of his duties. But as to that sinful, deceitful, odious story about bringing home a bride, the notion was quite too foolish. He had sworn as much with entrancing kisses, and was she not delighted to believe him? Why, there would be only two ladies of the party, he averred. Did his little goose suppose that he could lead his own mother to the altar? As for Doreen, the idea was quite as preposterous. Her frigid ways and tiresome national wrongs were not to his taste at all. Therefore Miss Norah was quite content, though she had just bidden her lover farewell. She would see him no more for several months, perhaps; for, to avoid attending a ball where objectionable fine ladies would congregate, my lord had settled to ride as *avant courier* to Drogheda, to superintend the preparations at the

inn where my lady and the household were to sojourn.

Though the volcano was heaving in portentous fashion, society seemed of one mind as to dancing jigs upon it to the last. Upon formal proclamation of martial law, the yeomanry had thrown off all disguise. The squireens were ruffianly through ignorance, their betters through self-interest, for it was easy to detect which way the wind was blowing. The chancellor was plainly for harsh measures. 'I will make these Irish as tame as cats,' he was heard incautiously to say. It was to be a war of class against class, in which both parties were artistically goaded by dark suspicions and deftly-spread falsehoods. Internecine strife is always remarkable for a display of the vilest passions. It seems as if the flow of gall is the more bitter from the difficulty of first pumping it to the surface. Major Sirr and his gang took to prowling in the night-houses—to making evening raids on taverns — a species of political crimping which was fruitful of brilliant hawls. Lists were even despatched to the Stag-house by Mr. Secretary Cooke that the town-major's lambs might study them, and 'pencil off such as they deemed dangerous to the country.' Bands of armed squireens sallied out in the mad frolics begot by drink, to 'give their opinion' to the disaffected, and the result was such a succession of night-brawls that Lord Clare was sorry and hurt.

'What are we to do with these depraved turbulent creatures?' he plaintively inquired of the

cabinet. And one and all — Arthur Wolfe even reluctantly consenting — admitted that stringent measures were imperative, or anarchy would surely supervene. So an order went forth that none should appear in Dublin streets after eight o'clock p.m., unless armed with a special permit to do so. The theatres were closed. The city was in a state of siege, as though really Hoche were at its gates.

But this was too dull for my lords and my ladies, who were not given to reading books, and had no intention that annoyance should fall upon themselves. They met for cards at one another's houses, their sedans protected by retinues of servants; but this was a poor pastime to folks who were accustomed to the public dances of Fishamble Street—the sumptuous entertainments at the Castle. They grumbled that this premature alarm was ridiculous. The French were not in Ireland, though the 'Shan van Vocht' was wont lyrically to declare at all hours of the day that they were on the sea. As for the United Irishmen, they were a 'Bugaboo.' With the troops which had been sent over any attempted rising could be frustrated at once; but they would not be so stupid as to rise—the tongues of these foul-mouthed patriots were more killing than their swords. My Lord Clare must be losing his nerve, he was not severe enough. They—the lords, urged by their ladies—would see that a proper spirit of terror was instilled into the scum, so that even if called on by their chiefs to rise, they would sit like beaten hounds—their tails between their legs. Lord

Clare looked at Lord Camden from under his beetling penthouse. Lord Camden looked at Lord Clare and hummed, and hawed, and shuffled. For the unfortunate gentleman who represented majesty, though he lived as much as he could, like some Japanese monarch behind screens, could not hide himself so well but that unpleasant speeches reached his ears. He had consented tacitly to make a Guy Fawkes of himself, and permit the bearers of the pageant to explode malodorous squibs under his nose; but when the evil savours choked him he winced in tribulation. He grew to hate his tormentor well-nigh as much as the people did, which was no little. But Lord Clare's day of triumph seemed in nowise on the wane—everything went as he wished it to go. His ruthless bearing had made him a despot in the imbecile senate. His colleagues, forgetting their rank, their country, and their dignity, yielded to the spell of his dictation as a fascinated bird drops before the snake. The letters of congratulation which he received from Pitt and others were accumulating within his escritoire. So soon as he should have tamed the tiger-Irish, how great would his reward be! He saw in the distance a vision no longer dim. An English peerage. A position in the English House of Lords, where great statesmen should listen to his periods—where Nestors should encourage his ambition. There seemed no end to the gorgeous vista. Why not some day assume the place of Pitt himself, who, though young, was (at least the world said so) eaten up by debauchery

and excess? And what was there which stood 'twixt himself and this glorious prospect? His own country, its interests, its safety, its political existence—nothing more! Pooh! Time works wonders. Things were going well. If these idiots would only fall upon the swords which were held out to them, there was no knowing what might not be accomplished. The Hibernian lords and gentlemen were in a fair way of exhibiting themselves to the odium of the world. Having danced their infernal dance at the bidding of those who clutched the purse-strings, they would make a sorry figure when the latter spurned them in disgust. What would they do then? Only sink lower still, and become more abject, till the pit of degradation should know no deeper depth. That was the way to work on them! To hold out threats that pensions would not be paid unless certain dirty work was done. To declare then that it was much too dirty —that by disobeying instructions they had forfeited the right to sit in the presence of decent people; that, having gone so far, all sense of respect must be abandoned; that, honour being lost, nothing was left to them but money; that with their own guilty hands they must cut the throat of their legislature, and drown remorse so long as the blood-money should last. This was to be the crowning edifice of my Lord Clare's scheme; and Mr. Pitt laughed a sardonic laugh as he tied a wet towel round his throbbing temples. He had got very drunk and lost at whist, had the gay young British premier;

but the excellence of this conceit caused him to grin, despite his headache.

'This Irishman,' he laughed, 'talks monstrous fine about the low ebb to which the Irish lords have sunk—forgetting that his own place is lower still than theirs; but he does his burrowing with rare ability.'

So Lord Clare worked and wormed with consummate diplomacy and tact, while those who employed him despised their tool in increasing ratio with his success; and Lord Camden's seat of thorns became daily more galling, and the silly mice gambolled with a recklessness which compelled pity—and old Father Time hurried on, afraid to look behind him.

My lords and my ladies, finding Dublin very dull, began to vent their spleen. The chancellor therefore saw that he must break the ice, which had been freezing up too rapidly. He announced, accordingly, that the Castle festivities would not be postponed, as had been intended. The grand ball, usually given on Christmas Eve, would take place a week later instead—no other change would result from the threatening state of affairs. Gentlemen, however, were requested to wear their swords; for all sorts of rumours were abroad, which the executive sincerely hoped were merely the invention of the enemy. How any enemy could be so heartless as to plot and conspire against so angelic an executive, etc., etc., as usual.

That the great ball was really to take place, was

hailed with universal delight. Everybody knows St. Patrick's hall—its magnificent proportions, the suite of state-rooms to which it leads; the splendid staircases, balconies, lobbies; ideal spots for flirtation—or conspiracy. All parties, patriotic and the reverse, rejoiced at prospect of this *fête*, for several reasons.

Sirr and his Battalion of Testimony were becoming so ubiquitous—informers had a way of turning up so unexpectedly—that it grew daily more difficult to hit on a place of meeting secure from their spying presence. Of course only gentlemen and ladies 'to the backbone' could expect to gain admittance to Castle dinners and concerts; but with the St. Patrick balls it was otherwise. These assemblies bore so official a character that respectable citizens of all denominations were certain of receiving an invitation. Lord Clare, aware of this, had made his calculations. The United Irishmen were sure to be there in force; it would not be his fault if they did not flounder into a hole.

It was for this ball on New Year's Eve that Norah Gillin had gone forth to purchase ribbons and plumes. It was for this ball that my Lady Glandore had waited—after which she and Miss Wolfe were to start for Donegal, changing their gala-dresses at the first stage upon the road.

Sara, who burned to see Robert and hear how his red-hot speech at the debating society had been received, importuned her father with unusual eager-

ness to take her to this ball. Was his little primrose becoming worldly? he inquired, with a gloomy smile. No, no! Twinkling feet should go with light hearts. Whose hearts might be light at this awful crisis? His girl must stop at home and say her prayers for Erin, and he would soothe himself and her by strains on the violoncello. That instrument was constantly in his hand now, whenever he was at home; and folks trembled as they passed by at night, for sure such dreadful sounds must come from the damned in agony!

Mr. Curran was exceeding sick at heart. His friend Wolfe upbraided him constantly for too openly opposing Government; whilst, on the other hand, anonymous letters arrived by dozens, abusing him for lukewarmness in the cause. He shook his head at the latter, muttering, as he tossed them into the fire, 'Blind fools! Mine is the waiting game. Ye'll be glad enough by-and-by that I stood neutral!'

But on the morning of the 29th a report came to the lawyer's ears which filled him with amazement. He put aside his beloved violoncello, and trotted to Dublin to see Emmett, Russell, Bond. The report was true, he found. Vainly he argued and protested—vowed that to save them from their madness he must go and tell Lord Clare. No! He would not betray them, but would go and intercede. The chancellor was not at home to him, though he saw him come from behind a curtain; so, retiring disconsolately to the Priory, he bade Sara fetch

out her gewgaws, as he must even take her to the Castle after all.

St. Patrick's hall was crowded when he and his child entered it—she in a white muslin dress, with a single frilling round its short skirt, a scarf of soft green about her neck, for the night was bitter, and the dancing-room beset by draughts. It was a gay assemblage, for General Lake (who had arrived recently) and all his staff were present in glittering English uniforms, which were not to be outdone in splendour by the officers of Irish militia. Even Mr. Curran's unmartial figure was buckramed in gold and scarlet, for was not he too an officer of the Lawyer's corps, which forbade its members to wear mufti?

The national love of parade showed strongly in the martial costume which the sons of Erin donned. Sumptuous embroidery was scattered with a lavish hand over cuffs, high collars, padded breasts, and tight-fitting pantaloons; while some regiments, whose colonels boasted of picturesque proclivities, were grand in the matter of shoulder-knots and becoming scarves around the waist. The effect was enhanced by contrast, for metal ornaments were little used at that day to adorn the dresses of the fair, who with towering ostrich feathers, silken fillets, lofty wreaths of flowers, could afford to resign to their lords and masters the glories of gold and silver. Variety of texture, too, heightened the fine effect; for whilst men were swathed quite stiff in gold-laced coats and voluminous cravats, young

ladies wore as little as possible, and that of thinnest gauze or crape, and their mammas the scantiest quantity of shot or patterned silk.

The scene was the more animated for the strangeness of its component parts. Irish patriotic belles were putting forth all their attractions to pump young English exquisites—aides-de-camp to Lake or Abercromby—to entrap them into unguarded statements, which might convey useful information to their brothers. General Lake himself was literally besieged by beauty, who lavished before that vain person the fascination of neat ankles, the flash of diamond eyes, the charms of pouting bosoms—in order to wring from him, in spite of caution, some hint of the intentions of the military. This was a game open to both parties. Aides-de-camp were instructed to ensnare their partners as to the plans of the United Irishmen; to discover, if possible, under the mask of innocent flirtation, who the acting delegates were, what were their views, their capacities, their characters; but it must be admitted that the weak sex generally had the best of it, for hot-headed youth is apt to be distracted by externals, and the costume of the period was characterised by peculiarities which were calculated to mislead young men.

This practice of seeking the society of political opponents for the purpose of discovering secrets, and of frustrating designs by sly hand-pressure or furtive kissing behind doors, was one quite after the burrowing heart of the astute lord chancellor,

who stood smiling by the side of the throne, his dapper figure clothed in official costume, his neat limbs displaying their roundness in black silk breeches and stockings. He was chatting with my Lady Glandore, who with Doreen sat close to Lady Camden, directing her attention to some prettier girl than usual—(where are more to be found than in the Irish capital?)—some peculiar headdress or *outré* garment. Nothing could seem more guileless than he, as he busied his pure soul with trifles—the colour of a shoe—the fashion of a sash. When Curran and Sara entered he changed colour, muttering ere he recovered himself: 'What brings him here, I wonder?'

He was not left long in suspense; for the lawyer bowed before the Viceroy, made straight for my lady's bench, and having deposited Sara by Doreen, began to speak abruptly in undertones.

'I tried to see you to-day, my lord, and could not. We were friends once, though it is long since we quarrelled. Yet I feel impelled to make one more protest. You are driving this unhappy country to the brink of a great tragedy. You, and you alone, are responsible for this. It is not yet too late, but to-morrow it may be. Reflect, Lord Clare, while yet there's time!'

Curran grasped the chancellor's arm in his earnestness.

'Do you refer to the United Irishmen?' drawled the latter.

'Do not despise your enemy, my lord. That

association at first was small,' pursued Curran, 'the earth seemed to drink it as a rivulet. A thousand streams, through the secret windings of the earth, found their way to one source and swelled its waters; it is prepared now to burst forth as a great river—what will its cataracts not sweep away? It is you, my lord, who will have aggravated sedition into rebellion.'

'Dear, dear!' smiled Lord Clare. 'Do you, too, listen to their claptrap? I say to you, as I've said openly all along, nothing can be more lenient than the executive! We stand simply on the defensive. I don't mind telling you in confidence,' he continued, eyeing his companion askance, 'that there is a plot which is to be carried out at this very ball to-night, for kidnapping his excellency and your humble servant, and locking us up somewhere quite cosy and comfortable. Audacious and clever, is it not? Yes, we have all the details—indeed, we had them yesterday, which may account to you for the muster of troops in the yard below, and the display of scarlet on the stairs and in the corridors. Clever, but, oh dear, how wild! I hope for their own sakes that the troops will daunt them; for nothing could come of this but an unseemly scuffle which would distress the ladies. Would you like to hear the rest of the plot? If these fools shall succeed in possessing themselves of our valuable carcases, a rocket is to be sent up from the corner of Ormond's quay, when two parties will start simultaneously—one to seize the artillery at Chapel-

izod, the other to surprise Newgate and Kilmainham. You look astonished. Well you may, for it is indeed astonishing.'

Curran looked deeply pained, but made no reply. The chancellor's cold flippant tones pierced his heart like knives. How could a band of unwary, warm-hearted, impulsive fellows, who were prepared to dare all for motherland, cope with this hard calculating schemer? Truly, it was well for them that *he* was there. The feeblest arm may be nerved by wrong for miracles. It was news of this rash project which had changed his plans as to the ball. He saw at a glance that it was impracticable. He had explained this to those whom it concerned; that it was an impossible compromise between those of the Directory who wished to wait, and those others who were for commencing a regular war this winter, which could be productive of nothing but disaster. The enthusiasm of the delegates had simply exasperated him. The God of battles, they said, was always on the side of right! Was He? Such had not been the experience of Mr. Curran's schooling. All he could do was to intercede with those in power —to make a final call on their humanity; and if that failed, humbly to bend the knee to Providence.

He was moving away when Lord Clare stopped him.

'Mr. Curran,' he said, with a winning show of teeth, 'as you said, we once were friends; why not again? It's not my fault, mind. The heroic *rôle* no doubt is charming; but, believe me, fitted more

for adolescence than for men in middle life. You aim at becoming the champion of the oppressed. You will come to grief with them, I fear.'

'In a general intoxication the most grievous of offenders is he who passes the cup, refusing to be degraded,' snapped the lawyer.

'Rebuking by importunate sobriety the indecent revelry around — eh, Mr. Curran?' laughed the chancellor. 'That's a fit finish to your period, I think. What a mistake it is when orators forget that they are not always addressing juries or constituents.'

As the lawyer plunged into the crowd, Lord Clare muttered:

'Damn him, he can't be bought; let us try what traps will do.' Then cried with the artlessness of infancy, 'Miss Wolfe! Miss Wolfe! What makes you look so animated? The statue has come to life while I've been gossiping with that eccentric friend of ours.'

Pupil of Machiavelli! He knew as well as did Doreen, though his back was turned—for he had a way of looking aslant like a hare—that a party of young men had just appeared in the grand doorway, who not long since were suffering as traitors. Tom Emmett and his associates presented themselves before their natural enemy, the Viceroy; then retired into a side-room to deliberate. Things were going wrong, yet the Emmetts did not despair. Tom had fought with all his might in council against the kidnapping scheme—in vain—and was no little

relieved when he discovered that the massing of troops about the Castle had rendered this plot abortive. As they marched up the grand staircase the delegates scrutinised each soldier who stood upright and impassive on each step. One hummed between his teeth of a 'green bough,' but met with no response. The executive fell into no errors. These soldiers, ostensibly placed there as a new spectacle for Dublin eyes, belonged to a regiment just landed, who could not by any possibility know aught about a green bough, or care about it, or bestow mysterious sidewinks upon such as chose to babble of it. The mine had through treachery of some sort been countermined. Those two parties who were waiting in ambush for a signal must wait and shiver in the cold; there could be no starting either for Chapelizod or Kilmainham. Perhaps they would all agree now to place firmer faith in their chief—to trust to the judgment of him who stood in the shoes of Tone. Why, the French might be under weigh by this time. A pretty thing it would be if upon his landing Hoche found the ground already cut from beneath his feet by the precipitancy of his Irish allies! They had been awaiting intelligence for weeks. Terence would return anon with news—something tangible on which to build up future edifices.

At mention of Terence a shade of coldness came over the faces of some of the young men. Cassidy —who was in splendid military garb, which made his stalwart figure look like a modern Mars—had joined

them on their entry; and chid them severely now for daring to be suspicious of Mr. Crosbie.

'What matters it,' he asked, 'about his brother's views? Brothers usually take up opinions as diametrically opposed as possible, as though to establish a family balance.' He himself who spoke, whom none would presume to suspect, had angled after Councillor Crosbie as an invaluable accession to their ranks; had angled in vain for long, till the Orr atrocity had roused even him. He, Cassidy, their old boon-companion, who would give his life-blood for any of them, would go bail for the honesty of Terence. 'His honesty, forsooth! The suspicion was ludicrous. What had he to gain by joining them, in proportion with what he lost? He, an aristocrat, who might be Earl of Glandore to-morrow —his brother being the fighting champion of the Cherokees.'

Robert followed suit with grateful glances at Cassidy. 'Their faith had been shaken by Miss Wolfe, than whom there was no patriot more earnest. But they must remember that Miss Wolfe, masculine and shrewd as by whiffs she seemed, was a woman who was, like all women, guided by her heart rather than her head. Terence, for aught he knew, might have been worshipping at some other shrine than hers, which, to a woman's mind, would be quite excuse enough for allowing private malice to trip up public good. Terence had been his (Robert's) friend for years. Aye, and Tom's too. They must beg the members of the Irish Directory to avoid

hasty decisions which afterwards they might repent. Terence should have been back ere this, no doubt; but when he did arrive he would show good reason for delay.'

This discussion was carried on in whispers in the little drawing-room through which a flirting couple strolled now and then on the way to the buffet. Therefore Cassidy, who of late had begun to assume a whimsically patriarchal air in his communion with the delegates, because he was by a few years their senior, thought it prudent to stroll up and down the room now and again, lest haply his ubiquitous friend Sirr should be lurking behind a shutter, or the lord chancellor himself be squatting under a chair. The situation, to our modern minds, is well-nigh impossible to realise. Traitors wandering close under the viceregal nose, which they had arranged that very night to tweak; traitors who were marked men, yet who were allowed to be at large; who made no pretence to loyalty, who openly admitted that they panted to see the tricolour; that when this hour should come their vengeance would be like a thunderbolt. Spies, too, in all directions, and families rent in twain by greed of gold, and rare examples of honesty. Brothers against brothers, fathers against sons, daughters against mothers; yet all dancing and smirking together on the powder magazine which might be fired at any moment.

Cassidy deemed it prudent to keep watch and ward, to be sure that no eavesdroppers were listening to the squabbles of the delegates; and, in

wheeling his big body round, caught sight of a new figure entering the ball-room.

Could it be? Terence! returned from Cork, looking handsome and well in the dress of the Lawyer's corps. The jealous giant ground his teeth as he marked him pressing gently through the crowd to make his bow, smiling his bright smile to his numerous friends, then turning to the left to where his relations sat. Doreen affected not to see him, Cassidy perceived with glee. She would not speak to him at all. She was busy arranging Sara's scarf about her neck. This was prime. He must see what happened next. Alas! the devil gets hold of the best of us through jealousy! So, whispering, 'Whisht! boys—here's Terence—returned!' he hurried to observe what was passing, pursued shortly after by the others, who for a second had been transfixed by the sudden appearance of the man about whose conduct they were quarrelling.

'Hope you enjoyed yourself at Cork. The sea-breeze has done you good,' my lady was saying in frigid accents to her son; for she resented the unfailing good-humour of this boy who was always respectfully dutiful, as if he were not the seed of his mother's long remorse. It was the thought of him that had sent the crows to plough furrows on her face; that kept her awake sometimes all through the dreary night. If he had only reviled her, she would have preferred it to this studied courtesy. If he would only complain—but her conscience was leading her astray. He knew nothing, except that

she loved him not. Why should he revile her? She had promised Lord Clare to caution him about his conduct; therefore she asked him to sit beside her. But for once he appeared undutiful, for he hurriedly postponed the invitation.

'I want to talk to you, Terence; sit by me,' she said.

'Presently, mother,' he answered. 'I will come back by-and-by; there is business that must be seen to.'

Then turning his back on her, he looked towards Doreen. She was so much occupied with that scarf of Sara's that it engrossed all her attention. She would not look up.

'I have come back, Doreen,' he whispered. 'Have you nothing to ask me?'

She raised her brown eyes to his for a moment. 'Nothing!' she said, then resumed her occupation.

Biting his lip he turned away, to be received in the exuberant embrace of his dear Cassidy, behind whom came trooping Tom Emmett and Robert; Russell, Bond, and others hanging back waveringly, as if not quite certain how they should act. Was he not an aristocrat? Had not Miss Wolfe warned them? Was it not too likely that he should be playing a double game? How difficult a task it was to separate friends from foes!

Terence, despite his cousin's ill-humour, was in great spirits. Eagerly he conducted his friends into a remote boudoir. He was dying to tell his

news, and to hear theirs. So earnest was he, so strong a ring of truth was in his voice, that the delegates could doubt no more. Bond, Russell, gathered round as anxiously as the two Emmetts. Cassidy's broad visage was alight with grins. He slapped his thigh in huge delight as Terence unfolded his budget. He had been treated with every civility at Brest. Hoche, his fears removed, was taking up the matter with all his might; his rival, young Buonaparte, was getting on too well. Both these generals were straining every nerve to outstrip each other. The Irish envoy had seen Tone in his uniform as général de brigade. He was to sail in the expedition aboard the *Indomptable*. The force was of fifteen sail of the line, ten frigates, and seven transports. There was some diversity of opinion as to the plan to be pursued, for Admiral Gardner was cruising in the Channel with the English fleet, and, crowded as the ships were with troops, it was well to avoid a sea-fight if possible. The message to the Irish Directory was that their allies might be expected at any moment—*where*, it was impossible to say—for much would depend on events, and it was taken for granted that on the first signal the country would rise *en masse*. Terence, indeed, was surprised that nothing had yet taken place, for when he left Brest on the 10th all was ready, the men embarked—thirteen thousand strong—the état-major prepared to follow. He, the envoy, had been compelled to travel through England, which had delayed his coming; but he

had ridden as fast as possible, lest all should be over before he could arrive.

'Started at last!' exclaimed Robert, full of glee.

'Ready to start twenty days ago!' ejaculated Emmett, with a long face. 'Please God no evil has befallen them.'

The conspirators looked one at the other uneasily. What if that English fleet should have intercepted the convoy?

'They've bin weather-bound,' Cassidy declared with confidence. 'Bad news flies quickly. If the English had done anything, we should have had them crowing over us long since.'

'There were fogs in the Channel, I remarked that,' assented Terence. 'I went down into the great cabin of the *Indomptable* on the evening of the tenth, to wish the officers God-speed. It was an exhilarating spectacle. The ceiling was a mass of firelocks; the candlesticks were bayonets, stuck in the table. A fine band was playing the "Marseillaise;" the officers, in full fig, were lounging about, some playing cards, some singing to the time —all full of hope. As my boat rowed me away, the effect of the grand hymn on the water, diminishing as the black hull seemed flitting into haze, was delicious. It is surprising, though, that they delay so long.'

The colloquy was interrupted by a general move to supper. It might create suspicion if they were to stand too long aloof from the company.

Arthur Wolfe plucked Curran by the sleeve, as

he met him, in mid-stream, and whispered in his ear:

'I saw you talking to Lord Clare. Ye've not been insulting him, I trust? Take the advice of your friend. Do not make an enemy of him, for he'll have it all his own way by-and-by, depend on it.'

Curran shrugged his shoulders with contempt.

'Intelligence of some sort has arrived,' continued the attorney-general, gravely. 'Lord Camden was called away half an hour ago, and sent presently for Clare, who was rubbing his hands and smiling when the two came back again. I overheard him say, "With your permission, I'll announce it after supper. It will make a good impression."'

'It's something cruel, then,' returned Curran, sadly. 'It's always something cruel when the chancellor looks pleased!'

Supper was served in the picture-gallery which adjoins St. Patrick's hall, and it was a splendid *coup d'œil* that met your eye as you crossed the threshold. Two long lines of snowy cloth, illuminated by myriads of wax-lights in massive silver candelabra, vanished in perspective like the iridescent path cloven by a ship at night-time. Great piles of fruit and flowers gave relief to the scarlet and gold masses of the uniforms, broken as they were, in regular sequence, by the plumes and dresses of the ladies; whilst the general richness of effect was still further heightened by dark rows of feathery palms and large-leaved shrubs, which served as a sombre background.

At the centre of the chief table, the Countess of Glandore occupied the place of honour beside the Viceroy, faced by Lord Clare, with Lady Camden on his right and Doreen on his left. On glancing down the table, my lady perceived with rage that the chances of the rush had placed Sara upon one side of Terence, while—(was this accident, or fate ?) —the other was occupied by Madam Gillin ! The young man seemed highly amused by his elderly companion, who—two monstrous ostrich feathers nodding over her the while—was vowing by her soul and body that she couldn't touch another skelp of jelly—no, not the tiniest wee bit—unless somebody fed her with a spoon; which Terence, entering into the humour of the situation, proceeded immediately to do, amid the laughter and applause of all his neighbours.

The human animal being apt to run after bell-wethers, it may be looked upon as natural that this strange conduct of a respectable matron was speedily imitated by the girls. They vowed one and all, at this end of the table, with a unanimity which looked like an epidemic, that they must be fed with spoons; and fed they were accordingly, by amorous sons of Mars, whose blood bubbled to their brains at close contact with perfumed curls; whilst their cheeks glowed, fanned by fragrant breath, and their eyes were dazzled by snowy busts thrown back, their nerves thrilled by fairy little kicks from elfin feet and pinches from pink fingers, in the course of this bringing-up by hand of grown-up bantlings.

Claret and champagne assisting, it must be admitted that at this end of the table the hilarity was more joyous than genteel. My lady looked thitherward several times with frowns, for in her day men, when they worshipped Bacchus, did so when the ladies had withdrawn. Then it mattered little what jests were bandied, what coarse freedom used. But it shocked her that a sabbat such as this should take place in the presence of his Majesty's representatives, of high-born dames and dowagers, of young girls who were presumably innocent, and that her own son should set it going.

'That boy is a thorn in my side,' she reflected, with grim resentment. 'He has never brought me anything but trouble from the moment of his birth till now. I promised to reason with him, and he has declined even to hear me speak. On his own shoulders then let the burthen of the future lie.'

The Countess of Glandore, stung by the humiliation which her pride was just then suffering, irritated as it was by the canker which had poisoned the maternal milk in her breast so long, almost wished, in a throb of wickedness, that her second-born might entangle himself irrevocably. Her evil monitor whispered that if he were to die or disappear, the numbing dread which had sallowed her life would be buried in his grave. So are we impelled by little puffs of wind, when we have once started in the ice-sleigh down the slippery incline hewn out like a steel ribbon, our vision blinded by snow swirls and the rapidity of transit, till with amaze we find

ourselves at the bottom with a jerk, not knowing what urged us on the road.

When Madam Gillin had convinced her beau that she could take no more jelly without choking, he desisted from his well-meant efforts, and the two began to converse on a pleasantly easy-going basis.

'Indeed, ye're a strapping chap,' she declared, with a tap of her fan and a great laugh, 'although ye're a bad neighbour. I like your face, and I'm a quare body. Would ye make me a promise now, just to plase a fanciful old woman? I wouldn't have an oath, there are too many about, worse luck! Ye would? Promise me, then, on your honour, that if ever ye get into a scrape, in which I can be of service, ye'll come to the Little House? Now didn't I say I was a quare woman, and you almost a stranger? You're a lad of your word, I know.' Then she added, exchanging her tone of banter for a serious whisper: 'Maybe I know more of ye than ye think, with the lock of hair cut away behind. Ye've taken up the cause. Bedad, I can't blame ye, though I'm sad for your sake. Mum's the word. We're strangers till you need me. Hush! They are watching us.'

Terence had scarcely recovered his surprise at the eccentric conduct of Madam Gillin, before there was a clattering of glasses and a hum, then a dead stillness of respect, for the Viceroy had risen on his legs.

He mumbled slavish platitudes anent the virtues of his gracious Majesty. No doubt everybody pre-

sent was in the habit of reading the *Gazette*. Of course they were, for they loved their sovereign, and were thankful for the privilege of watching, with respectful awe, his daily movements. He was at Weymouth, indulging in warm baths; so was her Majesty Queen Charlotte, and so likewise were their august children the Princesses. For his part, he, the unworthy representative of so perfect and enlightened and generally admirable a monarch, could scarcely peruse without tears the simple bulletin of that household. 'This morning the Princess Amelia walked, with her gouvernante, on the sands, to study the wonders of the shore. The Princesses Augusta and Elizabeth rode for two hours, on their Shetland ponies, whilst their Majesties were enjoying a bath!' Indeed it was a high privilege for a nation to have daily before its eyes so pure and noble an example of unsullied virtue, of innocent enjoyment and sterling worth. With heartfelt thankfulness for the blessing bestowed by Providence, he would propose the health of 'The King and Queen—God bless them!' upstanding, with all the honours.

All this time claret and champagne had been freely going the rounds. The roses had deepened from pink to damask on the cheeks of the Dublin fair—the young officers of yeomanry and militia had reached the stage of aberration which follows thirst and precedes coma. Standing on their chairs the better to let loose their bursting loyalty, they drank the health of their Majesties; whilst others—amongst

whom some of our friends were—raised their glasses with a flourish, muttering as they did so, 'Remember Orr!'

Terence, with his arm round Sara, who shrank at the uproarious din, took her glass, and, pressing to his lips the place where hers had touched it, whispered in her ear—then in that of Madam Gillin: 'To the diffusion of Light—may it break upon us soon!'

Then — silence being with difficulty restored — Lord Clare stood up to speak.

He surveyed the assemblage for a moment, casting his eagle eye on one and then another as though to consider how best to touch the sympathies and flick the raws of so incongruous a gathering. The attention of all was riveted on his smiling face, for a murmur had flitted along the lines like a breeze over corn, which was an echo of Arthur Wolfe's surmise. There was something behind—some intelligence of moment—the divulging of which the all-powerful lord chancellor had expressly reserved to himself.

'It is nearly twelve o'clock,' he said at length, in the rasping voice which set so many people's teeth on edge. 'We have gone through a year of trouble and anxiety, and are on the eve of a new one, which, I trust, will prove vastly different from that which is now dying. I will venture to propose a toast to you—gentlemen and ladies all—which may at first seem a riddle—but which, you will, I know, all join with me in drinking, trusting to a

satisfactory solution. I beg you to drink to the Wind.'

The chancellor paused—one white hand upon his hip—to mark the effect of his exordium. Young officers banged applause upon the table, not knowing why they did it, save that the leading spirit who guided them seemed to expect the silence to be broken. Arthur Wolfe made bread-pills with feverish absentness. Curran placed his hand behind his ear, and leaned forward with impatient anxiety. Doreen sat, her hands folded in her lap, staring before her into space.

'I give you the Wind,' the chancellor went on, with the clear coldness of a glacier rivulet 'because those who deplore the evil which has gathered of late like a mist over our unhappy country, will have to thank the wind for driving it away, and leaving a clear atmosphere. Alas! I cannot say that the horizon is as yet quite clear—small cloudlets float still upon the waters—but those heavy banks of rain, which we have all feared would drench us presently, are in mercy put to rout, and it is the wind that we have to thank for it. "The French are on the sea, said the Shan van Vocht." So runs the ditty which was in all careless mouths to-day. Well! I am authorised by his excellency's goodness to tell you that the French *are* on the sea—but flying back to their native ports by this time in every phase of discomfiture and distress.'

A pause—while the doves shivered. Girls drew

their feet into safety under chairs, and pushed away —shuddering—the importunate hands of British aides-de-camp.

'Some among you,' innocently insinuated the speaker, 'may possibly be aware that the French have been preparing for some time past to make a descent upon our coasts, and I tell you now (danger being over) that supposing they could have evaded the English fleet and landed in force, much difficulty might have resulted. But thanks to the wind which has blown persistently for days, although they did escape for awhile the vigilance of the English admiral, yet are they, by heaven's mercy, routed and put to flight, after beating about in the offing for well-nigh a week.'

Again the speaker paused to mark the success of his efforts. Curran, like Arthur, was rolling pills of bread upon the tablecloth; the young ladies, so demonstratively lively but a few moments before, were glancing at each other with blanched lips. Mrs. Gillin was sitting bolt upright, her trembling fingers making sad havoc with her fan. A low hum of dismay passed along the tables. The sound seemed to tickle my Lord Clare's ear. He waited for a moment or so, and fixed his eye upon Miss Wolfe as he took up the thread of his discourse.

'Yes!' he said with exultation. 'The French fleet has come and gone! The menacing danger has faded harmlessly away. It started 15,000 strong. Tempests arose, such as are always at the beck of Britain when invasion threatens her rights,

which scattered the Gallic fleet. Hoche—who was to do such wonders—was aboard the admiral's ship; General Wolfe Tone (who by-the-bye will certainly, though he dubs himself general, bring himself to the gallows) was aboard another. The flower of Republican valour was packed like herrings between decks. Where now are those gawdy cohorts? Making for Brest as fast as fear can drive them. I pray that the King's admiral may intercept them in their flight!'

The chancellor's little oration came upon the party like a thunderclap. There was no more flirting now, or dallying with taper waists. Doreen, at mention of her hero, woke with a start from reverie. Her lids quivered for a second, and shrank as though her eyes were blinded by the lightning. She cast one wild glance of reproach at her cousin—then was herself again—a trifle paler maybe; but otherwise the staid, impassive maiden whose grave austerity so awed the turbulent squireens. The Emmetts and their friends seemed stunned. Their hopes were blasted now, as it appeared, for ever. It would have been better not to have waited for tardy assistance so feebly administered. At times of deep anguish, thoughts whirl through the brain in vivid flashes. Tom Emmett saw at once that the executive had won a double victory. The bugbear which had threatened them was dissolved and gone. The members of the Irish Directory, who had been for acting at once, would turn now upon their comrades with a

plausible appearance of justice, and revile them for having allowed precious moments to slip by. The breach in the national bulwark, which had been showing in dangerous fissures, would be rent into chasms now — the edifice, which had taken such anxious pains to rear, would crumble into dust. It was the oppressor's hour of triumph. Ireland's fate was sealed. Such were the gloomy thoughts which crushed the leader of the patriots. With the majority of the party present it was far otherwise. A mighty huzza shook the rafters — another and another—like waves rolling in to shore. The officers of yeomanry and militia saw before them a bright perspective of lawlessness, wherein the Helots would be handed over to their mercy—to smite, and revile, and torture, and kill—wherein their daughters would become a legitimate prey, their flocks and herds a booty, their household gods an appanage. Now was the time come when it behoved them to display their zeal. So thought the squireens, so also thought the lords their leaders, who hoped that they might earn extra pensions by accepting the bait that was held out. So the glittering assemblage rose with one accord—on the chairs —even on the tables, and the luckless professors of a different creed were compelled to follow suit, as small stones are dashed along at the mercy of the breakers. With shouts, with frantic wavings of swords and handkerchiefs—supporting each other as they swayed in their excitement—the lord-lieutenant's guests drank to the wind, and, at the

same time, to the new year, which was thus heralded to the Irish capital in noise and drunken tumult.

The chancellor had turned up a trump and played it skilfully. With smiles on their faces and despair in their hearts, the Dublin belles returned to the dancing-hall. But the innate ruffianism of the yeomanry officers had been let loose by wine and frenzy. The girls fled to their brothers for protection—their excellencies retired to their own apartments in a hurry. A youth with down upon his lip seized the green scarf of pretty Sara, and wrenched it from her neck with a brutal jest.

'What do you hide?' he gibed. 'That lily bosom may not be hidden by the rebel colour—off with it!'

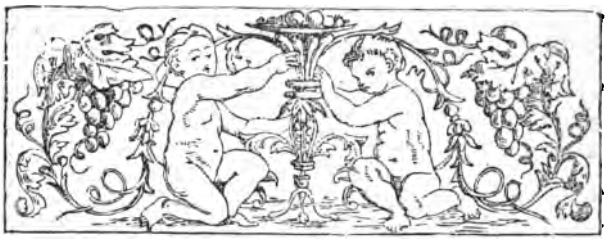
The youth sprawled prone at once, felled by a blow between the eyes. Sara shrieked, and clung to a protecting arm. It was Terence who had knocked him down, and who was soon the centre of a *mêlée*. Madam Gillin's feathers were seen tossing in the throng, while her voice added to the hubbub.

'In the days of Brian Buroo,' she wailed, 'bejewelled leedies might walk alone from one end to t'other of Innisfail! Now, faith, we can't be safe even in Pat's hall!'

My lady and Doreen made the best of their way to their coach. The soldiers stood in motionless rows upon the stairs, as though there was no brawl above.

Their captain had hurried to the chancellor to ask if he should clear the hall.

'No!' was the laughing reply. 'Their blood is hot—a little phlebotomy won't hurt them. Let be! let be! It's not a good omen for the year though, that it should dawn in bloodshed!'



CHAPTER V.

AWAY TO DONEGAL.

THE countess was much scandalised at the scene from which she had escaped, and favoured her niece with decided opinions on the subject, as six horses dragged the carriage through the night along the road to Drogheda.

'This will give you a notion, my dear,' she said, 'of the results of letting low people have too much of their own way. I confess that Lord Clare's conduct surprises me. If your friends the United Irishmen were to obtain the upper hand for a few days, they would disgrace themselves and disgust the world. You can't expect wisdom from a Helot-class.'

'It was not my friends who misbehaved themselves to-night,' Doreen retorted, 'but yours; the vulgar squireens and half-mounted gentry, who belong to the dominant party.'

'They certainly should have learnt manners from their betters,' acquiesced my lady, lowering her standard. She had seen but little of the world of late, had been content to view events through coloured glasses, and the hasty glimpse of garish daylight which had just flashed out saddened and shocked her. She began unconsciously to wonder whether Lord Clare had always spoken the truth. It would be hard, she felt, to lose faith in her old friend. Then the tangle of long-rooted prejudice, parted for an instant, closed round her again. 'Well, well! the squireens might possibly be more brutish than was desirable; but they were at least Protestants, and as such, superior to the Helots over whom they tyrannised!'

This reflection was a comfort to my lady; for she was not a bad woman, but one whose sympathies had been narrowed by the hardness of the world, and who had grown as uncharitable as many excellent people are who, professing to be more enlightened than their neighbours, are certain that they only are right, and all those who differ from them wrong.

Doreen lay back on the cushions, too sore in mind and body to carry on the argument. All that she could distinctly realise was that hope had flown away; that Theobald had been near at hand and was gone; that perhaps he had been captured and executed. What must he have suffered to have been within touch of motherland, only to be swept back again to sea! Hope, forsooth! What

is hope? too often but long-drawn disappointment in disguise!

The party jerked and jolted over the interminable road. The hostelries at Drogheda and Dundalk were full. It was well that my lord had ridden forward, for so many families were beginning to steal out of Dublin that, as an ostler put it, there was a 'furious penury of beds.'

At Derry they were compelled to leave the great family coach, for there was only a rough track along each wild bank of Lough Swilly, at whose mouth—its feet laved by the Atlantic—stood the island home of the pirate earls of Ennishowen. Their yacht lay ready in Rathmelton harbour; but Shane said he preferred riding across the bog to Malin Head, whence a boat would transport him in no time to Glas-aitch-é; and Doreen offered to ride too, even in his company—so anxious was she in her numbed condition to divert her thoughts by exercise. My lady—her projects being what they were—was little likely to object to a prolonged *tête-à-tête* which might assist in the realisation of cherished wishes; but her own riding-days were over, she said. She would take the yacht, and would not be sorry of a few hours' solitude. Poor mother! She was sacrificing more to her elder-born than he would probably ever know, in revisiting the ill-omened place—where that which darkened her life had been accomplished—where everything would prattle of that past time which it had been a never-ending struggle to forget. She desired to look

again on the weather-worn parapets and slender watch-tower of Glas-aitch-é Castle alone, lest her face should betray her feelings, and hint at the secret which had blanched her hair before its time.

The triangular peninsula which lies 'twixt Lough Swilly and Lough Foyle has been known, time out of mind, as Ennishowen; has belonged to the pirate earls for centuries, who, by reason of their craft, built themselves a fortress years ago on the sea as more convenient than a dwelling on mainland. It was a territory well suited to such masters, for, by guarding its narrow neck, it could be converted into an impenetrable fastness which was protected by sheer cliffs to seaward, whilst its internal features rendered it a foolhardy proceeding to attempt to invade it from the land side. Hence its population was a peculiar one, differing in many respects from the other dwellers in Donegal. When James I. planted Ulster with staunch Protestants, the ousted Catholics fled, some to Connaught, some to the extreme points of the north-western county where nothing flourished but wild birds. A large number took refuge in Ennishowen, where they embraced the trade of fishing, eking out a precarious existence by rearing flocks of geese upon the barren moors, whilst their wives wove frieze for clothing. An independent, warm-hearted, frugal, superstitious colony, extremely poor but decent, accustomed from the cradle to endure all hardships with a cheerful mien, too far removed from the world to know aught of Orangeism. Imbued with the clannish

feeling which elsewhere had nearly vanished, they looked to Glas-aitch-é with reverence as to a holy shrine, and fully believed that the bodyguard of Sir Amorey were sleeping by their horses in the sea-caves ready to defend the fortress if peril dared to threaten it. It was evident that if the disease, which Lord Clare was so fond of discussing, should take a serious turn in the north, it would be well for the chiefs to be among their followers, at least those who were friendly with the Government; for a timely word might prevent much trouble—a timely order be of incalculable service. My Lord Glandore, then, carried with him the blessings of the executive, with sundry vague promises of good things in store for him if he showed prudence, and directions as to how his time would be best spent; namely, in cajoling the peasants to put their shoulders to the wheel for the speedy erection of beacons along the seaboard. The recent Gallic escapade (for Hoche's expedition was really nothing more) taught the executive a lesson. Happily the fleet, or a portion of it, had been driven upon the coast of Bantry, whose inhabitants, being disinclined to rebellion, looked on the tricolour with the eye of unconcern. But for the blessed wind, the expedition might have landed on some more friendly spot, and be half-way to Dublin before the Viceroy heard anything about it. The enemy must not have such a chance again. Martello towers must be built within short distances all round the coast. On the apparition of the tricolour a fire must

be kindled, which should be the signal for a second on the summit of the next tower, and so on; so that in case of danger a girdle of fires would encircle the island, warning the soldiery in all directions—speeding intelligence to the capital in the twinkling of an eye.

My Lord Glandore was to busy himself with this matter so far as Donegal was concerned, and his sense of self-importance was so far tickled and amused that for awhile he endured, without too much swearing, the temporary separation from his Norah.

So my lady sailed up Lough Swilly, marking the new forts of Rathmullen and Knockalla, of Duneen and Inch, which gave to it a resemblance to a shark's mouth with teeth set raggedly in either jaw; whilst her son and niece started in the twilight before sunrise with a wild ride before them of forty miles and more. First they passed rows of mud-huts in straggling knots beside the way, which became more sparse as they advanced; crazy hovels whose rotten roofs were kept together by hay-ropes —thatch dyed to richness by decay, adorned with dry tufts of oats and barley, wafted in the summer-time from some less forbidding spot. Their ears could catch the clicking of a homely loom within as they passed, ere the housewife, low-browed and heavy-jowled, came to her door to gape at the unusual sight of strangers, an amusement in which she was speedily joined by a pack of naked children, then by her goodman, who rose as if out of a dung-heap

—a dudheen between his coarse lips, a long coat of faded homespun on his back.

Presently the road became a mere track upon the heather, which, leaving the lough to the left, struck out across the hills inland—a wheel-track over a vast expanse of purple prairie, now deep-indented in the bog, now barely discernible on a plateau of rock—impression of the rude carts of the turf-cutters across the mountains. No human dwelling might be seen for miles; no human figure, save perhaps an elfish child plying knitting-needles on a stone as she watched her herd of geese for fear of foxes—an uncanny, shock-pated pixie who seemed half-sister to the herons that were scrutinising their portraits in the pools.

Mountain succeeded mountain with a great heaving like that of the ocean hard-by, sometimes in an unbroken wave of black and russet; sometimes rent into a gorge where it had been torn by a strong convulsion, with overhanging crags of grey and twisted trees bent awry by the sea-blasts. Sometimes in the hazy distance might be detected a string of circular stains of a blacker colour than the rest—tarns in the moorland, home of the silver trout. Bushy and reedy some—some tawny with the paled glories of dead water-lilies. Then would the scene change to a bleak spread of stones—flat stones of monster size, with rifts like rivulets between, choked thick with feathery herbage. It was as though the rubbish left from the creation of the world had been carted and shot out there—a secluded medley of

unconsidered trifles, of no value or consequence to the human race. Then again would the stones give place to water—morasses of peat sodden with salt ooze which quaked under the weight of the traveller, the hoof-marks of his horse bubbling with slimy wash as he splashed on his uncertain way; troops of scurrying fowl starting up before him, protesting loudly as they fled at the irruption into their cherished solitude.

Shane and Doreen arrived by-and-by at the summit of a hill-crest, from which the northern half of the promontory lay spread like a map before them. Just below was a white speck—the village of Carndonagh—beyond, a row of lakes, tiny mirrors set in the hill-flank—on either side the jagged lines of Loughs Foyle and Swilly, varied with many a peaked headland and jutting point and shelving bay scooped out of the living rock. In front, a flat stretch on which cloud-shadows were playing hide-and-seek—a bopeep dance of subtly-chequered tones; and away still farther, looming through the mist, the bluffs of Malin Head, the extreme limit, to the north, of Ireland. As they looked, the mists melted in eddying swirls of gold, unveiling an expanse of immense and lonely sea, dotted with fairy islets strewn in a ravelled fringe—the long span of the blue-green Atlantic, marked with a line of white where it seethed and moaned and lashed without ceasing against the foot of the beetling cliff.

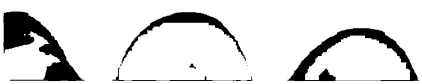
'What a lovely spot!' Doreen exclaimed, as she sniffed the brisk breeze; 'how wild—how desolate

—how weirdly fair! Not the vestige of a dwelling as far as eye can reach—except that speck below us.'

Unpoetic Shane had been busy counting the wild-fowl, watching the hawks, marking the sublime slow wheeling of a pair of eagles far away in ether heavenward. At the call of his cousin he brought his thoughts down to earth, and cried out:

'By the Hokey! a nice coast for the French to land upon. I wish them joy of it if they try. If they do we shall be in the thick of it, for look! You can just discern Glas-aitch-é—that dot in the sea, no bigger than a pin's point—between Dunaff and Malin. A fleet would have to pass close by us that was making either for Lough Swilly or Lough Foyle. But come—a canter down the hill, and we will see what we can get to eat. This sharp air gives one a plaguy appetite!'

Doreen spoke truly, for Ennishowen is weirdly fair. The atmosphere of winter gave the desolation she had passed through a special charm. The ponderous banks of rolling steel-grey clouds, which had only just been conquered by a battling sun, gave a ghastly beauty to its wildness. Dun and steel-grey, sage-green and russet-brown, with here and there a bit of genuine colour—a vivid tuft of the Osmunda fern. Such chromatic attributes were well in harmony with the intense stillness, broken only by the rustle now and then of whirring wings, or the sharp boom of the frightened bittern. But beyond Carndonagh the face of nature changed—or would



have, if it had been summer—for bleak elevated moorland and iron gorge vary but little with the season, whilst lower-lying districts are more privileged. During the warm months the track between Carndonagh and Malin is like a garden—an oasis of rich, damp, dewy verdure from the ever-dripping vapours of the Atlantic—an expanse of emerald mead saturated with the moisture of the ocean. Every bush and bank breaks forth in myriad flowers. Each tarn is edged with blossom, each path is tricked with glory. It is as if Persephone had here passed through the granite-bound gates of hell, and had dropped her garland at its portals. White starry water-lilies clothe the lakelets. The bells of the fuschia-hedges glow red from beneath a burthen of honeysuckle and dog-roses; orange-lilies and sheets of yellow iris cast ruddy reflections into the streams, while purple heather and patches of wild heartsease vie with each other in a friendly struggle to mask the wealth of green.

Strabagy Bay cuts deep into the peninsula. A rider must skirt its edge with patience, rewarded now and again by some vision of surprise, as he finds himself at a turn in the pathway on the summit of a precipice 1200 feet above the water, or in a sheltered cove where waves of *céladon* and malachite plash upon a tawny bed. At one point, if the tide happens to be in, he must sit and await its ebb; for the only passage is by a ford across the sand, which is dangerous to the stranger at high-water. Not so to the dwellers in this latitude, for

they speed like monkeys along the overhanging crags, or like the waddling penguins and sea-parrots that are padding yonder crannies with the softest down from off their breasts for the behoof of a yet unborn brood.

Towards Malin Head the ground rises gradually from a shingly beach till it breaks off abruptly to seaward in a sheer wall of quartz and granite—a vast frowning face, vexed by centuries of tempest, battered by perennial storms, comforted by the clinging embrace of vegetation, red and russet heath of every shade, delicate ferns drooping from cracks and fissures, hoary lichens, velvet mosses, warm-tinted cranesbill; from out of which peeps here and there the glitter of a point of spar, a stain of metal or of clay, a sparkling vein of ore. The white-crested swell which never sleeps laps round its foot in curdled foam; for the bosom of the Atlantic is ever breathing—heaving in arterial throbs below, however calm it may seem upon the surface. Away down through the crystal water you can detect the blackened base resting on a bank of weed—dense, slippery citrine hair, swinging in twilit masses slowly to and fro, as if humming to itself, under the surface, of the march of Time, whose hurry affects it not; for what have human cares, human soul-travail, human agony, to do with this enchanted spot, which is, as it were, just without the threshold of the world? The winter waves, which dash high above the bluffs in spray, have fretted, by a perseverance of many decades, a series

of caverns half-submerged; viscous arcades, where strange winged creatures lurk that hate the light; beasts that, hanging like some villanous fruit in clusters, blink with purblind eyes at the fishes which dart in and out, fragments of the sunshine they abhor; at the invading shoals of seals, which gambol and turn in clumsy sport, with a glint of white bellies as they roll, and a shower of prismatic gems.

In June the salmon arrive in schools, led each by a solemn pioneer, who knows his own special river; and then the fisher-folk are busy. So are the seals, whose appetite is dainty. Yet the hardy storm-children of Ennishowen love the seals although they eat their fish—for their coats are warm and soft to wear; their oil gives light through the long winter evenings for weaving of stuff and net-mending. There is a superstition which accounts for their views as to the seals; for they believe them to be animated by the souls of deceased maiden-aunts. It is only fair, in the inevitable equalisation of earthly matter, that our maiden-aunts should taste of our good things, and that we in our turn should live on theirs.

A mile from the shore—at Swilly's mouth—stands Glas-aitch-é Island, a mere rock, a hundred feet above sea-level, crowned by an antique fortress, which was modernised and rendered habitable by a caprice of the late lord. At the period which now occupies us, it consisted of a dwelling rising sheer from the rock on three sides; its rough walls pierced

by small windows, and topped by a watch-tower, on which was an iron beacon-basket. The fourth side looked upon a little garden, where, protected by low scrub and chronically asthmatic trees, a few flowers grew unkempt—planted there by my lady when she first visited the place as mistress. On this side, too, was a little creek which served as harbour for the boats—a great many boats of every sort and size; for the only amusement at Glas-aitch-é was boating, with a cast for a salmon or a codling now and again, and an occasional shot at a seal or cormorant.

My lady arrived there in the yacht, and spent her afternoon alone as she wished, for it was late at night before Shane and Doreen were rowed across—the latter wearied by the long ride, but calmed in spirit by communing with nature.

It was with a gloomy face and set lips that the Countess of Glandore wandered from room to room, all damp and chill from long neglect, each chair and table telling its own tale, each faded carpet and curtain whispering of the hated past, with its desperate anguish of humiliation. For this was the heart-chord which twanged most painfully in my lady's breast upon revisiting the place again. 'Set right the wrong while yet there is time'—how often had that wailing cry echoed in her ears! Yet while there still was time that wrong was never righted; for my lady had been so humbled, so abased, so utterly wrenched and mangled, during the year she had dwelt upon that island with my

lord, that she revolted, with indignant protest, at a possibility of having to traverse the dark Valley of the Shadow yet again.

As she looked at the chairs and tables, the whole bitterness of that degradation flooded back on her. She recalled how, sobbing on that sofa, she had prayed for death with scorching tears; how, standing by that casement, the sublime panorama of Donegal had been shut out by boiling drops of agony.

She sat down on an old chair, and looked back upon her life since last she touched its worm-eaten woodwork. A life lulled sometimes to a half forgetfulness, which was nearer to positive happiness than she ever expected to attain. The reflection returned again and again to her, that what had been done was my lord's fault, not hers—that she had acquiesced as the weaker vessel, and had washed her hands of the consequences. But then, several times, her peace had been rudely broken by vague terror of troubles renewed.

Would she be able to avert them? Would her puny woman's arm be strong enough to grapple with Fate? Events certainly looked threatening. Terence had involved himself in a forlorn hope. What if he should fall? My lady rose hastily, and flinging wide the window, panted there for breath. She realised, with a tingling horror of abasement, that if he fell, her own burthen would be lightened —that far away, muffled in her inmost soul, there was a voice babbling a hint that it would be a mercy if he fell. Her own son! It was a mother's inner

voice that spoke! She pressed her face helplessly upon the tattered curtain, as she had used to do when imploring a release, and groaned aloud—it was well that the others had not yet arrived.

Then, her mental vision sharpened by this pang, she wandered on, oblivious of the stories murmured by the tables and the chairs—for she was peering with all her might into the future now. Things were going crooked. There could be no denying that. She had schemed for the best. What would come of her scheming? Shane was deplorably difficult to manage—looked so like his father sometimes when angered, that she recoiled as she remembered the expression of his visage when she moaned over her fate to him upon this very spot all those years ago. He grew daily more difficult to manage, did Shane; because he was a Cherokee, a Hellfire; and it stands to reason that an important attribute for a Hellfire to cultivate must be a scorn of maternal lecturing and fiddlefaddle.

Lady Glandore (taught by a rough apprenticeship) quite admitted this; but looked forward now with satisfaction to the taming his spirit would undergo through a judiciously prolonged residence on a barren rock, with no one to uphold him in resistance to her will. Here he had no bully-Blasters to oppose a check to her influence. He would have nobody to talk to but the fisherfolk, save when he sailed down the lough to Letterkenny to be entertained by the squireens in garrison.

She did not fear their influence—poor country

oafs! She gauged the inherent weakness of Shane's nature, which cloaked itself under a mask of fierceness; she knew his overbearing, swashbuckling ways would sink into a minor key of mewing if they had no encouraging sympathy from without. She knew better than really to believe that 'absence makes the heart grow fonder.' Nonsense! The heart is too selfish a thing to feed long upon itself or shadows. If she could only manage to keep Shane here long enough, he would become as meek as a lamb, and would cease to bleat of Norah in his dreams.

On one side things were going crooked, no doubt, but on the other they were preternaturally straight. Could they be expected to remain so?

Arthur Wolfe, whose self-interest told him to stay on in Dublin and watch events, was only too thankful to throw a responsibility on his sister (in whom he trusted), who, oddly enough, was gracious as to the burthen. He might have been compelled to leave Ireland for Doreen's sake—to take her away out of a false position, and so sacrifice the opportunity of rapid advancement, which is the marked characteristic of a turbulent time.

But this difficulty was got rid off by packing the girl off to Donegal. He could drift where expediency drove, unshackled, to add to his darling's fortune. Nothing could be more satisfactory to her father's peace of mind; nothing could jump better with my lady's long-established plan of joining these two incongruous cousins in holy matri-

mony. Shut up in idleness in Glas-aitch-é (for the building of Martello towers could not really engross his attention), what else could he do but fall a victim to the charms of his handsome cousin?

One little ghost of doubt yet lingered in my lady's mind, which she did her best to exorcise. Doreen was dreadfully pigheaded. What if moping were to render her more obstinate? She was not a Blaster or a Cherokee, but a stern-browed damsel, with much romance, tempered by a little common-sense, and an awkward tendency to rely upon her own judgment. Being a woman, too, she would probably detect at once another woman's web, such as might hope to escape the scrutiny of male observation. Was it possible that she might choose to upset all her aunt's elaborate scaffolding, after all?

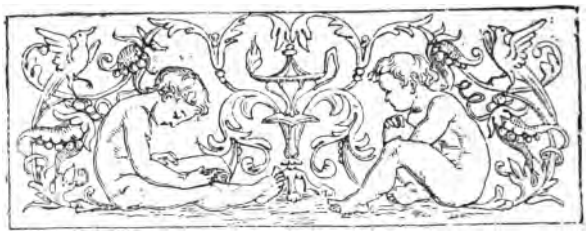
She had her own reasons for determining to tie Shane, wealthy Lord Glandore though he might be, to somebody with money. What a pity that he declined polite society, where complaisant heiresses were to be met with who would joyfully take his coronet, and afterwards obey his mother. Circumstances had so ordained it that there was absolutely no available or possible heiress for him but this stiff-necked Catholic.

It is exasperating, is it not, to mark how people persist in opposing that which others think is best for them? The prejudiced, warped Countess of Glandore must have had urgent motives indeed for the prosecution of her project to account for the way

in which she was stooping from her pedestal. Doreen was sharp enough to recognise this fact, and was never weary of marvelling at the enigma which seemed ever and anon to languish, then to spring to new life again. But Lady Glandore, when her mind was made up, could be obstinate too, though she had suffered much buffeting in life's conflict. That these two cousins were to be drawn together somehow, she was resolved. Opposition would come probably from Doreen's side, not Shane's. When her friends of the forlorn hope were slain and gone, she would surely succumb from mere despair.

My lady was glad, then, when she meditated on Lord Clare's hints as to the certain fate of the United Irishmen. It was distressful, though, that her own son should be amongst them. Was it distressful, or a relief? Would his mother be sorry if word came that he was dead?

My lady buried her face in the curtain yet again, and rocked her bowed form and wrung her hands. There is a phase of self-hatred and upbraiding which is more poignant than any physical pain, from which we emerge more wrecked and broken after each fresh access, and pray more desperately to be set free from torment.



CHAPTER VI.

GLAS-AITCH-É.

THE nautico-arcadian life of Glas-aitch-é restored Doreen's mental equilibrium by degrees, which had been sorely shaken by recent proceedings in Dublin. There she had come to ask herself whether there could be indeed a God with eyes to see and ears to hear, or whether the new-fangled creed was the correct one, which spoke of a mysterious principle —a species of magnet—in accordance with whose influence, as a dumb machine, the affairs of the world marched in established sequence. But in the front of this superb nature it was impossible to hold any such cold-blooded theory. When on waking she opened her casement to drink the brine-laden air, her youthful vigour got the better of her sorrows. She marked, stretching on the one hand as fare as ken could reach, the wondrous *silhouette* of mountains, rising tier behind tier in its series of morning

changes from jetty black to purple and then orange; or, not so far away, the chameleon cliffs whose varieties of effect were endless. She watched the seals tumbling in flocks; the guillemots and gannets at play, and shrieking petrels, Cassandras of the deep; and the eagles that had their eyrie in the dizzy crags of Malin-Head, disdaining low companionship. Then peering down from her window-sill, straight as a plummet-line, into that wondrously pellucid ripple, she mused of the legends of the place concerning the McSweenys—kings of those parts; known as the McSwynes of the unconquered axe, till Sir Amorey set his foot upon their necks; of how the rude chieftains had built themselves this fortalice, defended by three rows of concentric battlements, and had held it in the teeth of Corsair-fleets till the awful day of retribution for long thieving, when Sir Amorey Crosbie came—himself the greatest thief; of how, by stratagem, he lured the defendants out upon the narrow strip of sand which the waves leave bare at ebb, then scaled the rocks upon the other side with all his merry men, and watched with laughter while the garrison perished in the rising waters; of how their bracelets and ornaments and collars of gold were washed up from time to time to attest the truth of the story; of how the elfin-guard were sleeping even now within circumjacent caves, to clatter forth in force when wanted. If that were true, sure they would have come out long since, seeing what their motherland had suffered. Yet, after

all, not so : for this wild region had naught to do with the throes which had racked Erin's frame for seven centuries. It was cut off, severed as by a spell from the world's troubles and its tragedies.

Doreen felt this strongly when she went among the people on the mainland. Not one of them could speak anything but Gaelic—their mental ken saw nothing beyond the arrival of the salmon, or the number of distressful rents in a new fishing-net. They talked with awe of the sleeping bodyguard; had pricks of conscience when they slew their maiden-aunts ; looked with compassion on Miss Wolfe when she entered upon mundane arguments. Vainly she strove to persuade them that the treasures which the waves threw up were relics of the Spanish Armada—a portion of which was shattered in these ironbound creeks and gullies. They preferred to believe in the McSwynes, and did; yet for all that they came to adore Doreen, who was of their own faith ; who never shot her coracle upon the beach but she was sure to be surrounded forthwith by a bevy of dancing, screaming imps that sprawled upon the sand, that sidled up to have their heads patted like little tame nut-brown birds ; then fluttered off to herald out the fact that the good lady had arrived ashore. The people loved her, and she loved the people. The Irish heart is so warm, that a very little kindness will win it—for that very reason, perhaps, their English foes have chosen to repulse the gift, as one of too easy attainment to be worth the winning !

Once or twice she was persuaded by her cunning aunt to accompany Shane along the northern coast in the yacht. He was making a prodigious fuss about the Martello towers, and it would amuse her to explore the bays and inlets. Once—only once—she sailed down Lough Swilly, when her cousin went thither to examine the forts of Knockalla and Inch; and was royally entertained at the barracks of Letterkenny, by the amateur soldiers quartered there. It was like returning into Hades after a glimpse of the stars. The sheepish looks and bungling compliments of the squireens could not hide from her that this was the fabric from which the yeomanry were cut who hanged the people and burnt their cottages.

At Letterkenny the world began again — the wicked, cruel world. Inwardly she prayed that at least the harmless folks of Ennishowen might be spared, though all the isle beside should have to pass under the yoke. But the sight of these ruffians in uniform made her quail for them. Since Fate debarred her from the right of joining her people in their suffering, she would close her ears to their cries if she could, and return into the world no more.

The gentry about Derry and Antrim were divided upon all subjects except ruffianism. On this point they were in surprising concord. They were for the most part Presbyterians. The republican nature of their tenets disposed them to join the United Irishmen, and many entered heartily into the conspiracy,

until Government agents demonstrated that the triumph of the popular party would bring with it Catholic emancipation.

Now the Ulster men of the middle and upper class were Orange as well as Presbyterian. They looked upon a Catholic as a toad—an unclean thing which had no business to be created—which must be hurried out of life without delay, as a lesson to their Maker to make such mistakes no more.

Therefore, upon this fact being made quite plain to them, their patriotic ardour cooled amazingly, and they bade fair to rival the excesses of their brethren down south.

At this very dinner a tipsy young 'half-mounted' told as a fine joke a tale of what had happened at Armagh when he went there 't'other day to buy a horse. A certain rapscallion,' he said, 'was suspected of having some gunpowder concealed, contrary to the mandate of his Majesty. Shots had been heard in the neighbourhood of his cabin—that was enough. He denied the charge, and so must be made to confess. How was it done? Mighty ingeniously, i' faith! He was hung up by the heels with a rope full of twist, by which means he whirled round most laughably, like a bird before the fire; while the soldiers lashed him with their belts to make him speak. But his stupid old father spoiled the joke; for upon his son calling on him for help he up with a turf-spade and broke a soldier's pate open; upon which, of course, the old fool had to be disembowelled.' The other sparks laughed with great

he-haws at this funny anecdote, till one of them, looking at Miss Wolfe, thought 'maybe the leedy didn't loike it.' And Shane, surprised that his stiff cousin should be such a milksop, changed the subject to the building of his towers. The stone being handy, they would take but little time, he said. So soon as his task was complete he would send down the yacht for these agreeable young sons of Mars, and entertain them at his quaint old castle.

'It was indeed moighty koind in his lordship, to be sure; anything they could do to obleege,' etc., etc. So there was a great shaking of hands and display of newly-acquired military salutes, and everybody was charmed with everybody, except Doreen, who voted them bears and brutes, whilst they thought her stuck-up.

After this episode, nothing could induce her to revisit Letterkenny. She spent her time in day-dreams, drifting about in her coracle for hours, to return dripping wet, but, in a hazy way, more than half content. There is never much snow in Ennishowen, because brine is inimical to snow; but in winter there is much rain and mist and dense sea-fog, which penetrates to the bones and chills them. When the revolving cycle brought fine weather, she liked to establish herself by her window, to watch the strange glory of the dawn, sitting, as she smilingly observed, in her 'Grianan,' or sun-chamber. And what a spectacle it was to lull a vexed spirit into peace! First, as light crept near, she was aware of nothing but a vast sheet of pearl

—above, below, around—without line to mark where earth or sea joined heaven. Her enchanted prison seemed the centre of an orient jewel, through which the light of heaven filtered dimly. She occupied a magician's castle, suspended by mystic agency in a translucent ether of opal hue. The illusion was complete, for presently tiny cloudlets of rose and grey flecked the space above, to be repeated in dappled reflections on the still mirror below, which as yet knew no rim. Cloudlets overhead; cloudlets far down, under the hanging castle. Then, by imperceptible degrees, the opal flushed to brass with spots of tarnish (where seaweed banks shone through). Then a ridge of palest pink loomed into shape from nothingness, warming slowly to blood-red, and darkening to Tyrian purple—and the misty film was rent and crumbled, and lo! there was the rim to the still mirror—the glorious rim of that noble mountain-chain, now turned to a sharply-defined deep-blue—in unison with sky and water.

Doreen was comforted for the day when nature chose thus to open the casket for her; and rowed, or fished over the garden parapet, and was, by reason of her new peacefulness, more soft than heretofore with her aunt; and even strove sometimes to make herself agreeable to Shane. My lady marked the improvement as a good omen of success, but was not quite satisfied; for there was mixed with the damsel's good behaviour a cool indifference which suggested a carelessness of what should next befall.

When Shane was cross (alas! he grew crosser as he grew bored), Doreen's face never lost its calm. If it had, her aunt would have felt more easy, for it would have shown that the young lady noticed her cousin's moods. But no; she was kindly and polite—was not even shocked, as his mother was, when my lord made a boon-companion of the skipper of his yacht, hobbing and nobbing till both master and man were magnificently drunk. My lady was really displeased at this, for it wounded her pride that the head of the house should condescend to such companionship. Squireens from Letterkenny would have been better; but then they might have made love to the young lady, and my lady had settled in her mind that nobody must do that but Shane.

Poor mother! How earnestly she schemed, and how little came of her scheming! With what angelic self-denial she endured the ghostly whisperings of the chairs and tables, which would keep babbling of that past, however much she stopped her ears. Shane made no effort to woo his cousin. On the contrary, her superior manners and serene airs provoked him, by causing him to feel how inferior he himself was to her. Norah never made him feel this, for she did dreadfully vulgar things sometimes, for which he liked her as he chid her—things which would have made his mother's white hair stand straight up on end—tricks which the colleen had learnt from her good-natured plebeian mamma. Now he never would have dared to chide Miss

Wolfe; for even in her wildest escapades—when conversing with mysterious young men at night, or galloping helter-skelter over the country—she carried matters with so high a hand that even my lady herself was routed. Indeed Shane, though far enough off, was nearer to love than she was, for he felt something akin to a good wholesome hatred of his cousin, whilst she was only indifferent to him.

The fact was, that Shane, not being fond of book-lore, became sullen and fiercely sulky, as week followed week and he found himself a prisoner with no prospect of release. He had a suspicion that he had been trapped. Yet, while he revolted at the thought of it, his nature was too weak to permit of his shaking himself free without, at least, somebody's friendly countenance.

Now and then he ventured to suggest that there really was no reason why they should not return to Strogue. The French fiasco had put an end to danger from the Continent, as well as to the pretensions of the United Irishmen. What was his mother's opinion? Surely she must be tired of being cooped up, much as she seemed to love the place—(love it! poor lady!)—for she never went on shore among the benighted Catholics, being content, as a change, to make a solemn progress on the lough on calm days, rowed by ten sturdy rowers. Should her son order the yacht to take in bag and baggage? Should he send a messenger on horseback, to announce their proximate arrival in Dublin?

To all of these insidious proposals my lady merely

opposed a quiet negative, producing budgets from her pocket—voluminous letters from Lord Clare—upon the events which were passing in the capital.

According to him, affairs grew worse and worse, instead of better. The perverseness of his countrymen was appalling to an enlightened mind. There was no knowing what might happen. His dear old friend's second son was behaving ill. Happily, the loyal behaviour of the elder one would be counted as righteousness to the family, by a forgiving and benignant Government.

'It was evident from this,' she declared, with a decision there was no gainsaying, 'that Shane must do as he was doing. Terence might choose to disgrace himself; so Shane's conduct must be all the more immaculate.' (My lady's voice did not falter as she discussed this delicate matter. Doreen merely frowned and turned away.) 'It was the duty of Shane, for the sake of the honour of the Glandores, to keep staunch to the side of Government—the side of law and order—and the best way of doing that was by stopping where he was.'

Shane groaned in spirit, but submitted, and cursed the patriots by all his gods—empty-headed, crack-brained fools—who thus stood betwixt him and pleasure. He pined for Norah, for Cherokee suppers, Blaster orgies. Why, he was almost forgetting what a duel was like! His rapier was rusting on the wall. He became crabbed in his enforced idleness; pinched viciously the satin skins of his pet dogs, instead of stroking them; took

more and more to claret; was constantly making trips to Letterkenny.

With the exception of Lord Clare's occasional budgets, the party received little news, save garbled accounts from Letterkenny barracks. My lady insisted upon reading her own letters aloud, for the benefit of her niece; but that young person heeded not the chancellor's prosing, being serenely occupied in following the gyrations of a seamew, or the eccentric movements of a fishing cormorant, so that oft-reiterated abuse of her friends troubled her temper in nowise; and her aunt marvelled how it could be that the froward girl should have become proper and submissive, like well-behaved young ladies.

Is it not singular how to some people we unaccountably and invariably are impelled to show only the ugly or seamy side, which forms part of all our characters, and how to others we, without special effort, always turn the best? My lady and Doreen, though they dwelt together, never really knew each other. At times Doreen considered my lady mad; always harsh and disagreeable; while it was never given to my lady to detect the unselfish devotion and the strong worship of all that is beautiful and free, and the overpowering horror of all that is unjust and base, which was the better phase of her niece's character.

As for the newspapers, nothing could be gleaned from them. So soon as a paper became popular, it was acquired by money or threats (with the exception of Tom Emmett's, which ran its rigs unchecked),

and patriotism gave way to padding. There was little Irish intelligence. The Dublin prints might as well have been edited at Sierra Leone; and Doreen turned with impatience from their dulness. She received few letters herself, for there was no one to write to her except the proscribed, and, of course, it would not do for treasonable correspondence to pass through the hands of Lord Glandore, who amused himself by sailing to Rathmelton for the bag. There was no convenient shebeen here, where notes might cunningly be dropped; no useful Biddy or Jug Coyle—not even a handy cabin; for, whilst the peasantry round Dublin were one and all ready to do anything for the cause, those of Ennishowen cared not about it. And she was not sorry for this. With the French fiasco her hopes had melted—she knew too well the discordant elements which composed the Irish Directory. All that had kept its members together had been the expectation of French assistance—now that that was over they would fall asunder, and Cinderella would sit down again amongst the ashes. And was it not indeed better so? The wrath of God was kindled, for some reason which she knew not, against unhappy motherland. Was it not better, then, that her sons should accept their bondage with meekness rather than waste their blood uselessly? Doreen's contentment sprang in the first instance from the nipping of despair. A moment comes to us in our sore trouble, when we fold our arms and murmur, 'By God's mercy there is a limit to the sense of feeling. We

have reached that limit, and will feel no more;' and, strange as it may seem, with that resolve comes an impression of calm, which, in its way, is a sort of negative happiness. We have lost something, we are bereft of something which above all things we valued, yet we seem vaguely better for the loss. It is like the expression of peace which all blind faces wear, though their most precious treasure has been stolen—the sense of sight.

Doreen shrank from probing her own feelings with regard to Terence. Certainly his conduct distressed her more than seemed warranted by circumstances. She did not love him. No, not so bad as that, happily. She liked him as a fond sister might like a brother many years her junior, with a good-humoured satisfaction when he did well—for instance, when he made a splendid leap out hunting, or a particularly felicitous shot with his gun; and a feeling of pained displeasure when he did ill. And she told herself that he had behaved very ill, so ill that the fact of his existence must be erased from the tablets of her memory. That he should prove to be so double-dyed a traitor, so despicable and dastardly a schemer, filled her soul with horror.

Being a hero-worshipper, she had always despised him in a kindly superior way, for he was sleek and contented and commonplace, blessed with a good digestion; had looked on his grovelling contentment with pity, and is not pity contempt clothed in tenderness? To have been so interesting Manfred must have had a terrible digestion; while as for

the Corsair, I know that in private he suffered from dyspepsia. Whilst taking it for granted that Terence was too easy-going ever to become truly heroic, his cousin had warmed to him on the night at the theatre, when his indignation induced him to take the oath. That all that fervour should have been craftily assumed for the purpose of deceit was too repulsive a subject for reflection, and she put it from her. Maybe if she had calmly brought her mind to bear on it, she might have perceived that she was hasty, and have remembered that it is not right to condemn criminals unheard. But she had caught a glimpse of two ugly facts, and withdrew her gaze from them at once without further inquiry.

Somebody was a traitor. The delegates had been betrayed more than once under the cloak of friendship. My lady had told her distinctly (or in her haste she thought so) that Terence had done the evil deed, for the paltry wage of five hundred pounds. She had deemed that her cousin at least was honest, and before thrusting his image from her sight, had felt, with a soreness for which she could not account, that she would have been very, very glad if she could have pronounced him innocent. Doreen, though she diverted her attention from the painful subject, was wondrously interested—down in her inmost heart—in the guilt or innocence of Terence, and felt a feeble flutter there, whose cause, if she had understood it, would have disgusted her. As it was, the flutter in time died a natural death,

and, disillusioned, she sank into the apathetic condition of one who drifts and is content to drift—a rudderless resignation which is beyond despondency—an utter hopelessness with which his behaviour, though she wist it not, may have had something to do.

Not long after her arrival at Glas-aitch-é she received a letter from her father, in which was enclosed another, with whose seal the upright gentleman had refrained from tampering. It was brought to him by an aged crone, who extracted a solemn promise that he would not open it.

'If ye promise,' she said, 'I'll believe ye, Arthur Wolfe, for ye're a good man, or ye would not be given so good a child.'

The eccentricity of the speech pleased the attorney-general, who sent on the letter. It was from his godson Theobald, and Doreen recognised with gratitude the delicate tact which induced her father to pretend that he did not know from whom it came. It removed from her mind the portion of its load which was endured on his behalf; for the young hero was safe. His vessel escaped as by a miracle through the centre of the English fleet. Hoche too was safe. Both were to join the army of the Sambre and Meuse at once. He spoke no more of help from France; was evidently as disappointed as Miss Wolfe was. The dream was over. His sword belonged to the French Republic now, his uniform was that of a French general. He must carve a name for himself among the ranks of the

foes of France. Doreen thanked God that his pure young life had not been idly thrown away. Might it be reserved for glorious deeds on behalf of Erin in the future? It was not likely. Better far that he too should have abandoned hope; for Ireland was prostrate, never to rise either in his lifetime or in hers. All they could do was to bear as humbly as they might, shading their eyes from cruel sights—waiting as serenely as was possible for the call to a less hateful world.

So Doreen considered the seabirds and the transparent deeps, and patted little savages on the pate, and smiled her quiet smile, and made believe to be tranquilly resigned; though all the while she was entranced—numbed as by a spell.

CHAPTER VII.

SMITTEN WITH SERPENTS.

DOREEN was wrong. The French did not abandon so lightly their scheme of striking at Albion through Cinderella. They revictualled their fleet, made good the damage done by winds and waves, and looked forward to the accomplishment of their object within half a year or so of their first failure. To make victory doubly sure, a second fleet was got together in the Texel, under the command of the solid Dutchman, De Winter, who agreed with the Gallic Directory that now was the time or never; for the British navy was utterly disorganised—there were mutinies among the sailors at Plymouth and at Portsmouth, and one more serious still, under Parker, at the Nore. What moment could be better chosen for conveying an army to Ireland than one in which the mistress of the seas lay crippled; when the Channel—unusual circumstance—was open to the

world? Wolfe Tone, however, did not recover his enthusiasm. The conduct of his brethren at home, when friendly vessels were in the offing, had been reprehensible—pusillanimous. Instead of rising and making a vigorous effort for freedom, those who pretended to be their chiefs had bickered and shilly-shallied among themselves—a sight to command the scorn of honest men—and the young hero was profoundly discouraged. He began to doubt his countrymen; yet would he not desert them though they seemed inclined to desert themselves, but joined the Texel fleet, under Daendels and De Winter, hoping and praying for the best. It was a fine fleet of fifteen sail of the line and ten frigates. If the wind would only blow fair—if the shoals and sandbanks of the Texel were once safely passed—then success was certain. For Admiral Duncan, who was watching, had but a few vessels under his command, and even some of these were called home in consequence of the Nore troubles.

'Hurry then!' cried De Winter and old Daendels. 'Ship the troops, and let us be off.'

The troops were shipped—everything was ready; but Daendels and De Winter whistled vainly for a fair wind. The elements, as usual, were on the side of England. Before, there had been too much wind; now, not a breath stirred the air. The sea was a dead calm. The admirals and generals marched up and down the deck—beautiful—in blue, with rainbow sashes, and hats prodigious with great plumes of the three colours. But no breeze

moved a feather of the plumes. Exasperated, they descended to the cabin to while away the time with music, while the precious sand was dripping in the glass. De Winter had a pretty talent on the flute, as also had Tone, and so these two warriors obliged the company with duets—artistic trills and variations—what a strange spectacle! But by-and-by their patience oozed out of the flute-holes—they cursed themselves, and flung about the music in a passion; and indeed the clerk of the weather was vexing. June was merging into July—the mutinies were being put down—the golden opportunity was slipping visibly away; Lord Bridport cruised out with a fleet to watch the French at Brest; Duncan's handful became a squadron, swinging idly at the Texel's mouth; the soldiers, unaccustomed to close packing, showed signs of sickness; the provisions were sensibly diminishing; unless fortune should choose to turn her wheel with speed this expedition would be a greater fiasco even than the other.

Meanwhile there was a panic amongst the friends of Government in Dublin, who knew not that the elements were fighting for them. The position of England was most critical. Should this new enterprise succeed, what chance of succour could there be from Britain? None. She had quite enough to do to cope with her own difficulties. There were forty thousand soldiers who had been drafted into Ireland by degrees; but could these be relied on? The Hessians were beery brutal

wretches, who would probably turn coward at a pinch. The Scotch and English regiments made no secret of their abhorrence of the attitude of the native yeomanry. As for the militia, it was disaffected, and would certainly fling itself into the balance on the side of probable success. The people were fiercely sullen—in a dangerous mood, like rats prepared to spring. If the French should come and be victorious, they would rally like one man round the tricolour, and then woe to the small knot of tyrants! Not one of the ascendency party could hope to escape. Not a Protestant lord or lady in the land but would be hacked in pieces with the inevitably accompanying atrocities of internecine strife. It was an awful prospect. My lords, who had been blindly following the lead of the executive, looked uneasily towards the Castle. They had done as they were bidden, aided by promises and pensions—but of what use is a pension when your throat is cut? Were they to be protected from the growling rabble—these hereditary legislators, who had abused their trust—these amateur colonels who had disgraced their cloth—this venal degraded senate which was a byword among senates? Members of both Houses were nervous. Had their zeal led them perhaps too far? Would it be better to hedge a little—to permit the miserable cottagers to exist in peace? The Privy Council debated long and anxiously. Lord Camden was frightened at the acts which were perpetrated in his name. Mr. Speaker ventured to remark that

a line of commendation from Mr. Pitt, and a promise of help in case of need, would be consoling to his coadjutors. Arthur Wolfe became plunged in melancholy. He was drifting on a stream which sickened him, towards a palpable goal which he contemplated with terror. Was there no escape from the horror that was looming? He looked to Lord Clare as to a helmsman who is responsible for the safety of the crew.

But Lord Clare's nerves did not desert him at this crisis. His clear intellect told him that it was too late for hedging; now there was no retreat. King George hated the Catholics, and would smile on those who evilly entreated them. Mr. Pitt had sketched out a plan of action long ago, which must be carried out faithfully to the letter. Mr. Pitt had decided that Cinderella must be put on the rack; that her limbs must be given a good wrenching; and that afterwards—so soon as she should know by experience what agony really is—she should be tucked up cosily and made comfortably bedridden for the rest of her natural existence. It stood to reason that she would scream—so would you or I if thus surgically treated; but when once we grow used to it, there is a charm about being bedridden. People come to amuse us—to feed us with dainty things; they coddle us and comfort us, and we are really not unhappy. Therefore, although these unfortunate mutinies had somewhat complicated the case, it would never do to blench at so critical a moment. Having put his hand to the wheel, my

lord chancellor knew that he must look steadily forward, and not backward. His countrymen must be taught that any *régime* would be better than the one under which they groaned; the senate must be made so to commit itself that it could never raise its head again so long as the world rolled; then what would be easier than to consummate the original plan, to abolish the senate, and absorb Ireland by stratagem into the body of a complete British empire —one and indivisible?

So wrote the chancellor to Mr. Pitt, who replied in courteous language; for his chief puppet was jumping admirably: he would soon be battered and worn out—would then have to be replaced by another. But the doll was not past service yet—it was still gay and bright with paint; was still capable of dancing: so Mr. Pitt wrote civil letters to Lord Clare, bidding him not to stick at trifles. Thus supported, Lord Clare spoke clearly at the Council Board. Desperate diseases must be met with desperate remedies, he said. Arthegal, figure of justice in the Faery Queen, is armed with an iron flail. The people are furious, are they? Then they must be made more furious still. When you want to tame a lion do you pat him? No, or he would rend you. You strike him with whips—touch him with red-hot irons. To be governed he must be ruled by fear; and so is it with the people of this island. Having gone as far as we have, it will never do to show that we're afraid of them. They must be ground down—must be rendered so passive by ex-

haustion that, French or no French, they will be too weak to do much harm. In the first place we'll arrest those lads again who have been playing the fool too long. We will make a plunge at the leaders, so that if the Gauls should happen to arrive, they will find nobody in authority to co-operate with them.

Lord Camden endorsed these sentiments, mumbling platitudes about self-preservation; that it has unpleasant duties, but that many unpleasant things have to be done, etc., etc., and the council broke up; my Lord Clare strutting forth to give his orders, Arthur Wolfe moving slowly homeward with a worn and troubled face. Then by deft hints and nods and winks, my Lord Clare brought those who served him to know what was expected of them. He rallied the members of the Houses on their nervousness.

'You wear his Majesty's uniform, my lords and gentlemen,' he said. 'I presume you would not wish to be mere carpet-knights. The Irish always were good fighters. You will defend the King's rights if it comes to a brush with the rabble?' He gave the squireens to understand that they were fine jovial fellows, with a strong sense of humour and a subtle appreciation of a practical joke. 'Now that recent invention of yours,' he observed airily, 'of wringing confession from a man by hanging him, then cutting him down before his soul has had time to escape, is vastly droll!'

Thereupon the jolly boys, determined to win yet further commendation, and delighted to give vent

unrestrained to the native brutality of uneducated man, set their wits to work and gave birth to other inventions. We know that a demand invariably creates a supply. The gentlemen of the yeomanry vied one with the other in cultivation of their inventive faculty, and the result was an array of practical jokes, novel and splendid indeed! Even the great French reign of terror was thrown into the shade. The French, as we all know, are not inventive or witty. A guillotine—a constant flow of blood and falling heads; a boat with a trap-door to drown people by the dozen—amusing rather for a minute, then nauseously dull and monotonous. The jolly Irish boys were much wittier than this, and more ingenious; and yet, by one of the strange chances of history, people shudder still over Robespierre and Marat and their doings, and are absolutely careless and ignorant as to what was done at home not ninety years ago.

Lady Camden grew terrified at reports which reached her ears. Lord Camden shut himself up at the Viceregal Lodge, and promenaded the Phœnix Park, round which was a protecting military cordon. Lords and ladies left Dublin furtively. Some for England—some for their family acres in the far west; impelled—some by fear—some by the promptings of the chancellor—a few only by a sense of duty to their tenantry.

A certain earl set up a triangle in his barrack-yard, and was never weary of flaying the backs of the neighbouring peasants. To such lengths went

he and his, that an English colonel, also quartered there, was forced to expostulate with his lordship, to the chagrin of the latter. My Lord Downshire retired to his hills, and kept his regiment within bounds. Indeed, he and my Lord Powerscourt were severely rebuked by the chancellor—the latter especially; for he dared to say that his tenants had been armed at his own expense for the protection of property, not for the commission of murders—upon which the chancellor groaned aloud; for this was a malignant example to others. My Lord Powerscourt, however, was not to be persuaded. He locked up his grand house in Dublin, and revisited it no more until the legislative struggle took place which concluded the century.

Nothing could be more dismal than the Irish capital now. There was a species of curfew at sunset, after which few ventured in the street. Major Sirr and his myrmidons glided hither and thither on their devilish errand of cajoling men to their destruction. It was the business of these miscreants to provide victims for the lash by any means. Bands of drunken yeomanry awoke the midnight echoes with their shouting as they returned from breaking into a dwelling, or from flogging victims in the riding-school. For Claudius Beresford's riding-school had been turned by one of the practical jokes into a torture-chamber, where men, kidnapped on mere suspicion, were dragged and tied up, and lacerated without mercy night and day; whilst scurrying passers-by fled onward with

their fingers in their ears. Some died under the lash—some swooned, to wake up idiots afterwards—some recovered, to wear till death livid welts upon their backs and inextinguishable hatred in their hearts.

My Lady Camden, growing more and more apprehensive—for her lord's babble was incoherent—resolved to go down into the city and see for herself what passed there. She drove her four ponies along Ormond Quay, which was as deserted as if the town were plague-stricken; they swerved, and well-nigh upset her ladyship, for a single naked figure came tearing round a corner with wild yells and windmill arms, who, rushing past, flung himself over the parapet into the Liffey. Helter-skelter behind him came the hounds—in scarlet coats and pipe-clayed cross-belts—but the lady-lieutenant saw them not. The agonised victim of a joke wore a pitched cap upon his head, which was set ablaze and was grilling his living brains. This pleasantry was spoiled, for the wretch had presence of mind left to seek oblivion in the water. But another joke succeeded, which bade fair to end badly for the jokers. The Viceroy's lady lay back in a dead faint. Her ponies galloped along the street with her, their reins catching round their legs. The joke might have ended in the breaking of her excellency's precious neck. As soon as possible after this episode, she retired to England, and my Lord Clare made capital out of the circumstance. Were not the people behaving disreputably, when even the wife of the King's re-

presentative had thought it necessary to take refuge in flight? There had been, he averred, a new project to storm Kilmainham and set the criminals at liberty. To what a horrid nation was it his destiny to belong!

It is not surprising that at this juncture he should have found an annoying stumbling-block in Curran. That worthy could do nothing but protest; but people who protest can make themselves very disagreeable, especially if they chance to peer further than the mob, and choose to tell what they see. Cassandra was only a mad woman, but we all know how unpleasant she could make herself. Curran had a clear head, a sharp wit, a biting tongue, and he exercised all three in the House of Commons, much to Lord Clare's displeasure. Now we have all learned that as we mount the rungs of the social ladder, society bows more and more before conventionality. Such a thing is 'vulgar'—such another 'low;' why or wherefore nobody can tell, though it probably arises from the fact that the more rarified the atmosphere, the more artificial become those who breathe it, the less liable to think for themselves, the more ready to lean on others' crutches, the more likely to be shocked at the enunciation of new problems, which they are too idle or too prejudiced or too stupid or too sluggish to trouble about sifting for themselves. It might be taken for granted that the senators of both Houses were aware—down in their soul-caves—how base was their line of conduct. But for the sake of their

own interest, they had agreed to fence themselves about with a quickset of make-belief, for the concealment of their shame and the protection of their phantom-honour. It was a very vexatious thing, then, for a man who was gifted with an epigrammatic way of crystallising truths to make a snuffy little Solomon Eagle of himself—to persist in uncovering cancers which were decorously sheeted over, to unveil sores which were neatly trimmed about with sham roses.

Lord Clare, in his wrath, resolved to make another attempt to crush the viper. He set a specially rowdy band of jokers at free quarters at the Priory. They rollicked about, frightened Sara out of her wits, drank the lawyer's best whisky; but that vexed him not, for he was incorrigibly hospitable. He locked himself into his bedroom with his child, and droned out, to soothe her, a fantasia on the violoncello. It may possibly have soothed Sara (though she was in awful trepidation lest young Robert should ride up and perceive how she was insulted), but it most certainly succeeded in irritating the jovial sons of Mars in the dining-parlour below. They yelled to Curran to come forth. He came. They took his violoncello and smashed it into bits. Sara quailed lest her father's choler should outstrip his reason; but he only murmured:

'They are actors, playing parts which are set down for them;' and addressing them, said, with scorching contempt: 'Sirs, you are sent here to insult, under his own roof, a man old enough to be

your parent, and a young lady whose health is delicate. I sorrow to think that you are Irish, and that the fine cloth you wear should not exclusively be used by gentlemen.' Then, passing through their midst, he saddled his nag, and, trotting into town, related his story to his friend Arthur Wolfe.

The attorney-general was terribly distressed. This stream, on whose bosom he had elected to sail, was taking him—whither? He flew to Ely Place, scolded the chancellor in terms which made the autocrat stare—in such terms of burning reproach that the latter saw he had made a blunder; that he had outstripped prudence, and sulkily signed the order to remove the obnoxious soldiery.

But he was not to be turned from his purpose by any maundering sentimentality on the part of the attorney-general. It was necessary, was it, to leave Mr. Curran alone? That was a pity, but all the more reason for a display of energy in another quarter. In pursuance of his determination, so sweetly expressed in metaphor, to tame the lion with blows and hot irons, Lord Clare proceeded, as chancellor of the University, to hold a visitation there, in order publicly to deplore the doings of the undergraduates.

The worthy gentleman was pained, he said. Alma Mater had taken the fell disease, the contagious epidemic (there could be no doubt about it), the only remedy against the spread of which was cautery. A number of students were ignominiously expelled; foremost amongst them Robert Emmett, (who was con-

spicuous for a tendency to inconvenient argument,) although his tutor, Mr. Graves, pleaded hard for him.

Robert, filled with glee, rushed off to his brother's office to tell the glorious news—that he, boy though he were, had been deemed worthy of the martyr's crown. But when he reached the place he found that there were to be other martyrs besides himself. For the second time the house of his brother Tom was attacked and gutted. As he turned into the street, the presses were being pitched out of window, the types strewn in the mire, the tables and office-stools broken up to make a bonfire. Knitting his brows, he crossed his arms and stood watching the yeomanry at play; then wheeling about, he made the best of his way to Cutpurse Row, where, in the cellar of a crazy tenement, the patriots were accustomed to assemble, instead of riding out to the 'Irish Slave,' as they used more warily to do, before the destruction of the shebeen.

Russell, Bond, Dease, and others were there, delegates of the society for Dublin and its environs. Robert, looking round, perceived Cassidy fidgeting in a corner. Terence was not present. Cassidy observed this, and growled with disappointment between his teeth.

Tom Emmett was finishing a speech, wherein he declared to his audience that his opinions were changed. The French were coming; were, indeed, expected hourly. But it would not do to wait for them, as on a late disastrous occasion; a blow must be struck, a heavy and united blow. If the French

came to follow it up, so much the better. The shocking behaviour of the friends of Government was becoming hourly more unbearable; the outrages committed by soldiers at free-quarters daily more flagrant and atrocious. He spoke with Irish hyperbole and a burning fervour of conviction which just suited the temper of his hearers.

'We must heed no more,' he cried, 'the glare of hired soldiery or aristocratic yeomany. War, and war alone, must occupy every mind and every hand in Ireland, till its oppressed soil be purged of all its enemies. Vengeance, Irishmen! vengeance on your oppressors! Remember the crimes of years! Remember their burnings, their torturings, their legal murders! Remember Orr!'

At the end of a long peroration he paused for breath; and Cassidy, who was evidently anxious to 'catch the speaker's eye,' trolled forth in his rich voice the words which were becoming familiar to every one's lips:

'"What rights the brave? The sword!
What frees the slave? The sword!
What cleaves in twain the despot's chain, and makes his gyves and dungeons vain? The sword!

All present took up the chorus, and looked towards the giant as though waiting for the next verse; but he raised his hand for silence, and said:

'Bedad, ye're right, friends. The sword's the only thing for poor Pat. But be careful now. Where's the young lordling who makes himself so busy?'

'Councillor Crosbie should have been here,' returned a delegate. 'Maybe he's bin detained.'

Cassidy smiled a smile of meaning, and leisurely surveying the knot of men before him, replied with a dry cough:

'Maybe he has! Let's hope it's upon honest business. I've come here to give ye a word of warning, a friendly hint I gleaned up at the Castle. I'd advise none of yez to go back to their own homes this day.'

'Why? Speak out, man. We are all friends here,' said Tom Emmett, calmly.

'Becase ye'll chance to find visitors if you do,' was the blunt rejoinder. 'Now I'm off.'

Robert Emmett eagerly corroborated the giant's hint. He had seen the soldiery but now in his brother's house. It was likely that if one was attacked, the dwellings of the rest would likewise receive a visit. It would never do for the prime movers in the conspiracy all to be trapped. Perhaps it was a false alarm, though. At Tom Emmett's a seditious print was published, which it was a wonder had been spared so long. The case of the delegates was different, for strict secrecy had been maintained concerning them. None save the members themselves knew who formed the central committee. Government spies had no means of knowing their names. In this at least they were cautious. That they had all taken the oath, was neither here nor there. If Government intended of a sudden to lay hands upon every Irishman who had taken the

oath, they would do well to follow Herod's example at once, and order a general massacre. No, no. It was absolutely impossible that either my Lords Clare or Camden, or Secretary Cooke, could possibly know who all the leading spirits were by whose agency the vast machine of conspiracy was set in motion. Tom Emmett must disappear for a while. His paper put him too much *en evidence*. It was good of faithful Cassidy to keep his ears open. Blunderer though he was, and lamentable as had more than once been the fruit of his blundering, yet was he now and then most useful, and deserved a special vote of thanks from the Directory, which then and there they passed on him.

Apparently he was modest as well as virtuous, for in the cackle which followed his announcement he departed, his flat face aglow, his eyes twinkling with satisfaction at their compliments.

'So Emmett's paper was to be stopped at last,' they said one to another. 'The only marvel was that it should have been permitted so prolonged an existence. The last mouth which had lifted up its voice to speak the truth was to be gagged. It was indeed time to draw the sword.

Then Robert proudly told of his expulsion from Alma Mater; of my Lord Clare's overbearing mien at the visitation; of the many warm hands which had gripped his, as, disgraced but proud, he quitted the quadrangle.

Tom, his eye kindling with emotion, laid his hand upon his younger brother's head.

'Robert,' he said, 'what e'er betide, if, in the conflict which is imminent, we two be separated, the one who survives will be proud of him who's fallen. We shall conquer. Erin shall be free! But many must first lay down their lives for her! I pray God that it may be His pleasure to spare yours!'

Robert turned white, though his heart was stout. He was brave with the highest of all bravery, for though the sight of a cut finger made him ill, yet was he determined now to face the sea of blood, if need were, without blenching. His was a higher courage than that common one which looks on danger without fear. He knew that in action he should be in mortal dread; but he knew too that, upheld by duty, he would nevertheless be always in the van. A thought crossed his mind which brought with it a momentary tremor. When the fiery cross was at last lighted—when the hands of kinsmen were at each other's throats—when Dublin was burning—her gutters running red—what would be the fate of delicate sensitive natures like that of Sara—of sweet, pale Sara Curran, round whose form his heart-strings were softly wrapping themselves? What if he were to fall? what if fortune should not smile upon the patriots? He was quite aware that Heaven frequently delights in persecuting those who do well, and showering favours on the most undeserving, almost offering a premium for evil-doing. Therefore, however just the cause of Erin, it was possible that her probation was not over—in such a case what would become of Sara, and such

as her? Dear gentle Primrose! He thrust the unwelcome thought aside. There were enough lugubrious subjects which might not be escaped, without wilfully conjuring up baleful images. He returned the pressure of his brother's hand, and with ardent eyes upraised, broke out into song once more, in which all joined solemnly, as though offering up a war-hymn:

> 'What shelter's right? The sword!
> What makes it might? The sword!
> What strikes the crown of tyrants down—
> And answers with its flash the frown?
> The sword!'

Truly there must have been something ill-omened about this special hymn. For the second time it served to cloak the advancing footsteps of the enemy. For the second time it was interrupted by the rap of the same unfriendly fingers.

Somebody was knocking — somebody gave the password 'Mr. Green.' It must be Terence. He had promised to come, in order that a military scheme of his might be discussed; one of which Emmett approved highly, though stupid Cassidy had affected to laugh at it. Certainly it must be Terence, who bade fair to become the leader they had all been sighing for so long in vain. Why did not some one run and open the door? It is but poor manners to keep a gentleman waiting in the street. Robert was hastening to do so—for he loved Terence dearly—when he was stopped by the old woman who kept the house.

'Whisht! Master Robert, darlint,' she said in a terrified whisper. 'Sure, I looked from the garret window and saw the glint of bayonets. For the love of the Holy Mother have a care!'

Swiftly the boy climbed the stairs and looked out. The hag's aged eyes had not deceived her. The street was surrounded by a cordon of soldiers, who stopped passengers at either end at the bayonet's point. A guard of yeomanry was stationed at the front door; another at the private back-entrance, which was accessible by a tortuous passage into a side-street. A short person with hooked beak, eyes too close together, shaded by brows which met in a tuft over his nose, was knocking. It was Major Sirr. How could he know of this back-entrance? How did he know that the watchword was 'Mr. Green'? There was of a surety hideous treachery somewhere!

Robert returned to his comrades and told them who was outside. Then Cassidy had been muddle-headed once again! The news he had brought was worse than none, for it was misleading. Instead of bidding them escape forthwith from Cutpurse Row, he had told them to avoid their homes. The houses was surrounded. *The secret back entrance upon which they relied was known.* Who was the Judas?

Having revealed so much, how much more might he not reveal? With troubled brain and clouded eye Tom Emmett looked on one and then another of the haggard faces before him.

The knocking continued. Some step must be

taken. Happily half a dozen of the delegates were absent. The town-major might smoke out the nest. Some of the hornets were abroad. This was a mercy. The entire brood would not be taken. Who were the absent ones? Terence! Tom Emmett wrung his hands together as the light broke on him. How blind! It was to him Cassidy had vaguely pointed. What a snake in the grass, with his clever military plan and pinchbeck enthusiasm! Tom remembered now the behaviour of Miss Wolfe to her cousin at the ball. Her veiled warnings. She was as true as steel. Alas! She could aid them no longer with her counsels. She had seen through her cousin, and, her family feeling coming into jarring juxtaposition with her devotion to unhappy Erin, had retired from the field, too deeply wounded to take any further part in the affray. Yes! It must be Councillor Crosbie who was the Judas. Tom Emmett saw it now that it was too late. In a few hasty words he conveyed his impression to his brother.

Robert opened his mouth indignantly to defend the councillor; but he only sighed, for, from whatever side the treachery came, it was soul-wearing. His forebodings of a few minutes since crowded up again like visions in a nightmare. A pitfall had been cunningly prepared for the patriots to their undoing. A few were yet abroad who might take a responsible part, but this was a withering blow. Treachery? Of course there was. It was altogether a bewildering occupation to pass trusted characters

and names in mental review with an eye to the detection of the traitor. That there was a raitor there could now be no doubt, but Robert swore to himself with sturdy faith, that, be he whom he might, his name was not Terence Crosbie!

The knocking became louder—more peremptory. There was no escape. There was nothing for it but submission. With dry lustrous eyes Tom Emmett bade his brother go and open the door.

There would be a trial—a court-martial. Vain mockery! Would the result be execution—or lifelong servitude—or banishment? The chief of the Irish Directory felt the humbling conviction that he was not fit for his post. Like Phæton he had leapt into the sun-chariot. He had been fooled and toyed with. The precious deposit whose care he had presumptuously accepted was shattered through his fault—yes—certainly through his fault. He should have been more cautious in accepting Crosbie's overtures. Precious lives would now be sacrificed—the cause gravely compromised, if not altogether ruined. Execution—lifelong servitude? How wildly did Tom Emmett long at this moment for the former—how gladly would he have hugged the rope—how joyfully would he even have walked to the riding-school where Beresford and his fellow-devils carried on their fiendish work! Any personal pain—the more poignant the more welcome! Anything which might rouse the hapless patriot from the grinding weight which crushed him now, as prone on his face he lay sobbing on a form.

Many an encouraging hand was laid upon his shoulder.

'Cheer up, man! we're in the same boat,' the delegates murmured. 'It's the chance of war—of an ignoble war waged in the dark against honest men by an ignoble adversary. Fortune is cruel to us; but we'll snap our fingers in her face. If we are to die, let us die as men—not in tears like women. Rouse up, Tom! rouse up, boy! Put on a good front. Open the door, Robert. If they have learned to probe thus deeply in our secrets, they will know more—enough to hang us every one. There's no good in battling with them.'

Major Sirr entered, and saluted his victims with one of the elaborate military evolutions which had become the vogue. Tom Emmett started from the form, and held himself erect. A paper caught his eyes. He clutched and tore it into fragments.

'Gentlemen, you are my prisoners!' Major Sirr said, with a portentous sword-wave. 'It's no good resisting. I'm glad to see you know better than to resist. Here is my warrant—made out in all your names. We will go, if you please, in the first instance to Castle-yard; then to Kilmainham, where you'll meet your friends.' He smiled at Tom Emmett with a sinister smile, and stirred the fluttering fragments of paper with his swordpoint. 'What's this?' he said, the tuft of eyebrows wrinkling down his nose. 'I know what it is—a list of your precious society, I dare say. Ye're mighty fond of waging war on paper, gentlemen!

Look here now! All we want to know of ye we do know—or could speedily learn. I might have those bits picked up and glued together. But I won't, for 'tisn't worth my while. There! Come, gentlemen, march! Dease—where's Dease? I saw him but now. We mustn't lose him, for he's a docthor, and Kilmainham's terrible full of sick! Dease, where are yez? I have him on the list.'

But the delegate who answered to the name of Dease had no intention of visiting Kilmainham. Upon the first entrance of Sirr, he had withdrawn in the confusion to an upper room, and making use of his surgical knowledge, had severed the femoral artery. When the soldiers found him he was dying; which aggravated Sirr no little, who was proud of his masterly treatment of the hornet's nest.

'Come, put out a nimble leg!' he cried crossly. 'We've parleyed too long. To business! to business!'

Between a double file of soldiers the delegates were marched off, down several streets, to Castle-yard, while the populace looked on, dull-browed. They attempted no rescue. It is probable that few realised what band it was which was being thus openly conducted to its fate (many such bands passed along Dublin streets)—that few were aware that in this little knot were centred the hopes of deliverance for which all were praying.

They were gone. Only Robert Emmett and Major Sirr were left behind.

'Am I to go with you? I will go,' Robert said.

The major looked at him, and gave way to a sepulchral cachinnation. Then by his action he belied the language he had used just now. With the greatest care and deliberation he stooped and picked up the torn scraps of paper. When they were bestowed to his satisfaction in a wallet, he looked at Robert and laughed again, wrinkling his sinister eyebrow tuft:

'Adieu, my lad! and good luck!' he grunted. 'No, no! We don't want you yet, my little cockatrice! All in good time—when ye're fledged! Good-bye! or rather *au revoir!*'

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. CURRAN LEAVES PARLIAMENT.

MAJOR SIRR'S ill-timed mirth rankled in Robert's bosom. He was not worth taking, then! Yet Lord Clare had deemed him dangerous enough to justify expulsion from Alma Mater. Lord Clare. What did he intend doing with this last haul of the net? That document which Sirr had picked up so carefully would provide him with such a list of country members as would satisfy for awhile even his rapacious gullet.

Would he hang them all, or be content, for the present, to cage them as he did before? No. Times were changed since then. He was deliberately scourging the land with scorpions. No mercy might be expected at his hands. Was Tom Emmett to be hanged? Was he to suffer an ignominious death before he had had time to strike a blow for motherland? That would be too hard. It must be prevented somehow. It was providential that

the younger brother should not have been kidnapped too. It was a miraculous intervention, for duty shone clear before him. He must obtain the release of the patriots, even if to do so he should have to kneel at King George's feet. Intercession must be made. At the thought the lad's courage rose. He would go and consult Curran on the subject.

As he hurried on down Dame Street, he strove to comb his tangled thoughts into some symmetry. Who could the Judas be who wore his mask so deftly? Sirr's Battalion of Testimony was spreading to huge proportions; the Staghouse by Kilmainham, where the wolves dwelt, could scarcely hold them now. Doubtless there was a secret service as well as this public one so insolently flaunted.

'Of whom does it consist?' Robert kept asking himself. 'Of whom? The friends of our hearts—the wives of our bosoms. It is awful to think how, when a country is well stirred up, the mud will rise to the surface!' Then, ruminating as he went, he thought of Terence, and murmured mournfully, 'Could it be he? I pray not, for I love him as a brother!'

A shadow lay stretched before him. With a shudder he turned aside to avoid the effigy of a good man, who by a singular caprice of history has been elected high-priest of a mean purblindness, which he above all others would himself have most abhorred. William III.'s effigy, in its incongruous classical costume, is no whit more contemptible than some of his admirers have tried to make his character.

But such is the way of the world. We set up a pole, and drape it with our own sentiments, then kneel down to worship, crying, 'How perfect is our idol!' Of course it is; for the drapery is woven, as a spider's web is, from out of our own bowels; what can be so perfect as that we have ourselves created, however loosely it may hang on the support we have selected to bear it?

Turning away from the Juggernaut of Orangeism, Robert beheld the subject of his thoughts, and the man of whom he was in search. Mr. Curran and his ex-junior were standing in earnest talk under the colonnade of the senate-house. The rush of events had changed both men even in their externals. The older one seemed shrunken and grey-skinned. His unkempt elf-locks were more wild, his uncleanly linen more disordered, his eye more bright and restless, than of yore.

Those who knew him well perceived that he was torn in sunder by two antagonistic selves. He yearned in secret for the success of the popular movement; he peered out anxiously for the first glimmering white sail in the offing; his soul bled for his country's misery; he longed to know precisely the patriot leaders' plan, that his keen brain might advise upon it—yet he railed at and derided those very leaders to their faces, spoke scoffingly of France, declared that all was hopeless; snapped up any incautious delegate who spoke to him too openly of the society.

The reason for his odd conduct is obvious. His

judicial mind—expert in weighing evidence—had seen long ago that the combatants were ill-matched —that it was Honesty fighting against Guile. It was possible—just possible—that Heaven for once would change its usual tactics, and permit Honesty to come off the conqueror. It was possible—but oh, how improbable! Curran saw that so soon as Honesty had tumbled into the Slough of Despond, the firm grasp of a friend who was a paradox would be needed to pull him out; of one who should be protected by the glamour of his own virtue against the dagger of the murderer, even as medieval saints are mythically supposed to have been protected against the torments of the caldron and the wheel. Such a peculiar and delicate position Curran actually occupied.

As we have seen, he remained in close friendship with Emmett and the rest, and also with such important people in the opposite camp as the Glandores, without the faintest suspicion of treachery falling on him. He fearlessly rose and poured forth such denunciations against the executive in parliament, as would have brought any other man to Kilmainham and its minuet. But for all that, the informer dared not point his finger at him; even Lord Clare was convinced that he must be endured or bought—not browbeaten.

Once or twice he had been hustled in the street, but had curbed his peppery nature by a sublime effort. His life was of more value to his country than that of many drunken rufflers. He quietly

refused to fight now with any such paltry ruffians.

Councillor Crosbie was more altered than his chief; the expression of his face was changed. As Robert surveyed it he endured the compunction of remorse, in that for an instant he had doubted him. If Doreen had not been perversely haughty, she could not have accepted her aunt's garbled tale so readily. But then her spirit was wrung awry by long-continued crooning over wrongs; and being unhealthily sensitive, was predisposed to look out for evil. She had seen so much trouble that she had come to believe there could be nothing else in store.

Terence's face had lost the open laugh of careless *bonhomie* which had vexed her—which was so well suited to its Irish cast of features—by which I do not mean the confined forehead and coarsely gaping mouth, which make many of our countrymen so uncomely—but the highly-coloured, cheery face, with ruddy lips, which when they are parted display a row of dazzling teeth. His eye, whose unruly dancing defied fate, was strangely at variance now with the moody brow, till lately so unwrinkled; while a reckless swagger, which was a new characteristic, spoke of a bitterness and chafing defiance which a green tabinet necktie, with bows ostentatively displayed, served but further to accentuate. He stood in earnest converse with Mr. Curran, who sourly shook his head. Just out of earshot faithful Phil leaned against the wall, firing-iron in hand,

watching his master in his dog-like fashion—sporting also, in humble imitation, a rag of green about his neck.

Rapidly Robert unfolded his budget. The visitation at Trinity was mere child's play; not so this wholesale arrest. Even Curran forgot his customary caution, and put quick sharp questions as his face grew greyer. Emmett, Russell, Bond, were in prison, then. They would be tried—how? The law courts were closed and silent. By court-martial? Hardly. Lord Clare was too clever for that. Given the heads of a conspiracy who had grievously compromised themselves, he would of course get up a pompous series of mock state trials, with 'juries of the right sort' to bring the pageant to a predetermined end, and so justify and whitewash his arbitrary acts in the world's eyes. This was what he would do.

'The patriots should be defended!' Curran swore. He would defend them himself, no matter at what personal risk; in spite of any amount of threatening. The bursts of eloquence which before now had startled his audience to conviction, should be nothing to the burning words by which he would wring these unselfish lives from the jaws of death.

It was for this that he had rested on his oars so long. He had defended many of the proscribed with varying success. But these were the chiefs, the head and front of the offending. He felt that the power was there, a precious gift direct from God. He would blast the witness, whoever he

might be, as he sat upon the table, till even a jury of the right sort would not dare to convict upon his evidence; he would paint in vivid colours what he and his fellows were—wretches who, buried as men, had slept in the tomb till their hearts festered and dissolved—to be dug up thereafter as informers.

He bade Robert be of good cheer, and listened, with a kindly arm about the lad's neck, to his project of going to England. He would go to the fountain-head, vowed Robert, for no mercy could be expected here; he would waylay Mr. Pitt himself—would force himself into the Royal presence—would compel England to listen to a recital of her sister's tribulations. The English could not know what was going forward—the King, whom people dubbed good King George, could not know of it. If he did, he was a hypocrite who ought to be unmasked—but of course he did not. The ardent lad quivered with excitement and noble fervour, while the little lawyer felt himself invaded by pity. The poor boy persisted in believing that Right was sure to triumph. He believed that his story would rouse the English to interference—Mr. Pitt to contrition for excessive sinfulness—that it would melt like snow the prejudices of the most ignorant and pig-headed monarch who ever occupied a throne. Poor lad! In spite of all he saw, his illusions had not yet been taken from him. Some people require an operation with pincers. The dreadful moment had yet to come when he would wake up and know with certainty that his doll's inside was bran.

'My boy,' the lawyer said, 'the impulse is excellent. Go, and prosper, if the Fates will it so. To tell the truth, I believe more in my powers of oratory here than yours over yonder. I ought to have special interest in you,' he pursued, with a sad smile, 'though it's to the lowering of my own conceit. I made the discovery this morning—what owls we old fogies are!—that it is not for the sake of my brilliant conversation that you young butterflies choose to flutter about the Priory. Upon my word, I used to think it was, and that your taste was vastly fine.'

Robert's face assumed a guilty hue, and he lowered his eyes.

'Nay—don't blush, man!' returned the elder, whilst Terence looked from one to the other curiously. 'When the spring comes, birds will mate even on battle-fields! The perseverance of nature, despite obstacles, is incorrigible! Would ye believe it, Terence? A girl to whom I'm a bit partial flung herself into my arms this very morning with shrieks, declaring that if all a foolish servant told her was true, and Ireland doomed to be a slaughter-house, one crathur at least must be saved—who was not her papa! She expects me, I suppose, to build an ark for this new deluge, and take in of every animal two after his kind.'

'Oh, sir!' Robert murmured timidly. 'If things go well——'

'No, sir,' returned Curran, with sudden roughness. 'Things aren't like to go well. Do not

deceive yourself or her. You, for one, are nearer to the gallows than the bridal bed! When Ireland is free, when my lord chancellor is higher even than he is—as high as Haman—then maybe we'll talk of such follies, but not till then. Meanwhile, mark you, the gates of the Priory open to you no more. There shall be no more dangling after my Primrose till the crisis is over, for better or for worse. Get ye gone, now, and good luck betide ye! There must be a power of it somewhere, for here we've got ne'er a scrap.'

Young Robert did as he determined; and so for awhile we shall not look on him. In London he was kept dallying by a judicious diet of delusive hopes in accordance with a suggestion from the Irish chancellor, who wished him kept well in tow, lest haply he might turn out useful later. Amuse this baby brand, he wrote; manage him cleverly, and lull him for a few months to sleep.

Sara saw him no more. He came no more to the Priory, and she was glad of it. The child was dazed and bewildered by the reports which reached her through the servants. She made no pretence of comprehending politics. She only knew that so long as Robert remained away, he would be kept safe out of the perilous vortex. She had faith in her father's genius, and in his power, if need were, to protect both himself and her; yet woke she up sometimes in the night with a cry, having dreamed that misfortune had befallen Robert. She could not shake off a foreboding that, young and excitable

as he was, he would entangle himself in the toils; and so it was with a whimsical thankfulness that she heard that he whom she worshipped was gone, and joyfully counted the months of his absence.

When Robert broke in upon the converse under the colonnade, Master Phil did not at first take heed of him, for that worthy, who was always ready to touch his hunting-cap with good-humour to any of his master's friends, was in rueful contemplation of a fact which had lately come to his knowledge—namely, that red-haired Biddy was not true to him—that the colleen who had enthralled his affections was sadly misbehaving herself among the soldiery. Honest Phil was not specially quick-witted, yet he could put two and two together after a clumsy fashion, and he saw darkly with sorrow that the carroty-polled virgin could scarcely have been ever true if she could thus brazenly go over to the enemy. He revolved the facts in his mind that she it was who had been Miss Wolfe's post-office—that it was she who with him had carried out the pike-packing in the armoury, which had so oddly been discovered; that she it was who had wormed secrets out of him—the honest but incautious youth—which she might or might not hold *in terrorem* now over the heads of those whom he loved best. There was but too much proof of the frail fair one's delinquency. When the Irish Slave was sacked, she had rushed yelping to the Little House, giving tongue with such vociferous howls that two soldiers speedily

pursued and brought her back, and finally carried her off kicking—a special prize. For a long while her disconsolate adorer (when not on duty in surveillance over his master) searched high and low for her. Had anybody beheld a beautiful creature with ruddy locks of gold?—to see which would be to adore for ever—and so forth.

But as time went on, his master's self-appointed duties became so engrossing and erratic that the servant was fain to sacrifice his private interests altogether for the nonce, trusting that some day the fair creature would turn up entrancingly spotless—constant to her swain. It was with no slight pang, then, that on that very morning he had recognised a well-known back and followed it—a broad square back covered now with purple velvet, surmounted by the well-known locks, which were shaded by a wondrous hat and feathers. The apparition led him to——the riding-school!—the dreadful hall of torment which people shuddered at as they went by. Too much amazed to realise what he did, he followed still. She entered—so did he. Noisily she was embraced at once by a dozen half-drunken men in uniform, and returned their salutes with strict impartiality. He was thunderstruck! Then with terror, from his sheltered nook, he surveyed the scene.

Screams for mercy made his blood run cold. Two men lay panting on a heap of straw; one quite old and feeble, released but recently from the lash. The elder would evidently soon be quit of

his destroyers, for his lips were blue and his eyes glazed. The other, roused by a shout of laughter, stirred his head to curse his tormentors. This was enough for them. What a fine opportunity for a newly-developed joke! Quick—some gunpowder! Biddy poured some into two outstretched palms. Rub it well into his hair—with a will now, Biddy—for it's shock, and will hold a prime dose. Now, stand well aside while we fire it with a long match. Horror-stricken, Phil escaped—his slow brains chaotic in unacccustomed whirl. What should he do? His charmer had developed into a fiend. Was she who had enthralled his affections the one who was at the bottom of all the mischief—the arch-betrayer of secrets? She had been in everybody's confidence—Miss Wolfe's (God bless her!), Mr. Cassidy's, Master Terence's—all! The snake in the grass, whose existence puzzled the gentry so. Could it be she? Had he not better speak out and tell them? No. They were conversing so earnestly. It was not his place to interrupt his betters. The intelligence would keep. He would make a clean breast of all he suspected to his master in private.

And his betters had good cause for the earnestness of their talk. When Mr. Grattan threw up his parliamentary seat, Curran had twitted him for loss of temper. But now his turn was come. He had spoken out rashly in the debate, which was still droning on—had distributed rhetorical slaps in the face, which caused the friends of Government to

wince. Then one, bolder than the rest, interrupted the flow of his eloquence by saying:

'We're growing warm. Will any gintleman tell us an anecdote to bring us into a better temper?' And then Curran, flying in a rage, declared that he was wasting the energies which would serve him better in another place, and proceeded to abdicate with scorn his seat as member.

Terence, when he heard of it, doubted the wisdom of the move, and begged leave to know, as nearly as he might, what the orator had said.

'I charged them openly,' was the simple reply, 'with their corrupt practices. I charged them with a systematic endeavour to undermine the constitution in violation of the law of the land. I charged them with being public malefactors, public criminals. Then I was called to order, and I repeated the charge even yet more strongly, bawling out: "Why not expel me now? Why not send me to the bar of the Lords? Going out, I will repeat the accusation, and the winds shall carry it — that the ministers are traitors, who should be publicly impeached—and, advancing to the bar of the Lords, I will repeat it there. If I am to suffer in the public cause, I will go further than my prosecutors in virtue as in danger."'

'That wasn't wise, for nothing could come of it but noise,' Terence said, shaking his head at his old mentor. 'This is the time not for talk, but action.'

'It may happen,' returned the other gently,

'that the boys of action may come to need the help of a silver tongue—after all! I know not for certain how far ye're in it, Terence; and it's best I shouldn't know. Any way, I'm glad ye're not like your brother, who's a half-caste in character, more than half Englishman. You, at any rate, are not ashamed,' he continued slily, 'of going to *tay* with your mammy, or of perambulating by the *say* with a colleen asthore! I wish ye'd keep clear of this, though.'

'Would you have had me stand by—a *man*—a cold spectator of events? Would you have me show the white feather now, when so many have been kidnapped? No—I know you would not,' Terence said, looking in the little lawyer's eyes (into which the tears started) with a hand placed on either shoulder.

Curran said nothing for a few moments, then, blowing his nose, whispered rapidly:

'If there's naught to be gained by noise, my boy, still less will foolhardiness avail us. Why will you wear that gorgeous scarf of green? If you are to do man's work, do not act like a baby. There's only you and Cassidy left now to give directions to the country delegates. I don't know much, and it's not my business; but I can see now the tail of the Erin-go-bragh order sparkling within your vest. Two hands fraternally gripped. How lamentably childish, when so much may depend on you! Erin's cause will be none the less well served, I warrant, for fewer gewgaws on the

persons of her sons. Too much green ribbon, Terence! Every man among you sports a green ribbon, and has some compromising paper in his pocket! Why, here's a roll in yours. For shame!'

'That's the military plan,' Terence returned, 'which I was to have shown to-day to our friends. It was a mercy, certainly, that you detained me here, or else——'

'You would have fallen a sacrifice to overweening prudence! Therein lies Erin's curse. Her sons are faithful enough, and earnest enough; but they're all impractical and scatter-brained.'

'Faithful, are they?' echoed Terence, mournfully. 'So many traitors walk among us, that no one can swear any day whether he's like to sleep or hang at night!'

'Traitors!' repeated Curran between his teeth, as he turned his head. 'Yes. Traitors galore! There walks the arch-traitor. Lucifer among his cohorts.'

Lord Clare was coming up the steps towards the lobby of the House of Commons, surrounded by a bevy of obsequious gentlemen who had rushed round to the 'Lords' entrance,' in Westmoreland Street, to warn the chancellor that dreadful things were happening. His hatchet face wore an evil expression which, melting away, gave place to beaming looks when he perceived before him his hated enemy.

'Ah! Mr. Curran. Taking the air? You're

looking well, Terence,' he cried in his rasping voice, holding out a hand to each. 'Anything doing in the Commons? Not much to do, eh? Dull times. Sad—sad times, my friends! Dangerous, too; very dangerous.'

'You are right there, my lord,' returned the lawyer, curtly. 'Tyrants should remember that secret murder is the special weapon of the weak against the strong.'

The chancellor bit his lip, then showed his teeth again. He would not lose his temper. But it was singularly ill-mannered of this demagogue to try and make a scene in the public colonnade!

'I have warned you solemnly before, my lord, of what you are doing!' went on the sturdy little man. 'You play with awkward weapons. Take care they don't slip and cut you. The Staghouse overflows with guests, I know. Yet more than one has lately disappeared.'

'Consigned to Moiley?' laughed Lord Clare. 'Well, they weigh, I suppose, like wise men, the risks of their position against its advantages. We are quits. For I have warned you too. You'll get nothing by your present attitude, I do assure you. It is lamentable to see a clever man so waste his opportunity. I am sure if Terence's mother was here she would say the same. You believe in her, I think, though you've always done me the injury to mistrust me.'

Here he gave a friendly nod to Terence, who took no heed of it.

'Would you have me tie my countrymen in bundles?' inquired Curran, 'to raise myself to wealth and to remorse? The envy of fools—the contempt of the wise. No! Come what may, I will mourn over and console them; aye, and rebuke them too when they act against themselves.'

'Which is pretty frequently the case!' returned Lord Clare. 'I assure you I weep quite as much as you can over my country's misfortunes!'

Mr. Curran waxed peppery, for he hated humbug.

'And yet, my lord,' he sneered, 'your glittering optic is so dry that the finest gunpowder might be dried on it!'

This was uphill work; but the chancellor still smiled, though a hectic spot showed upon his cheekbone; for the squireens around were beginning to hee-haw, and he felt he was playing *le rôle ridicule.*

'It is a sad thing, when the interests of millions are placed at the mercy of one man's selfish ambition—or error, if you prefer it—for what is individual ambition but error?'

'Selfish ambition!' echoed Lord Clare, grandly. 'I have the honour to be a chosen servant of the King, and as such I humbly strive to do my duty—nothing more.'

'You owe no allegiance to the land that gave you birth? I tell you, my lord, here before these gentlemen, that as chancellor you are betraying those rights which you have sworn to maintain;

that you are involving Government in disgrace—a kingdom in consternation; that you are sacrificing to your own avarice and vanity every sacred duty, every solemn engagement which binds you to yourself, your country, and your God!'

'Mr. Curran!' cried the chancellor, drawing back.

But the little man was not to be stopped now; his blood was up, and his eyes flashed fire.

'You are too arrogant to learn a lesson from history. Think why the royal ship of France went down. That of England labours now. "Throw the people overboard," say you, and such as you, "and ballast with abuses." Blind pilot! Throw your abuses overboard, say I, and ballast with your people!'

Lord Clare was getting very much the worst of it. He could not prematurely broach the question of a Union before all these people. He scarce knew how to act.

'You are bent on tieing Ireland to England—I can see through you. What is the price to be?'

'You are forcing a quarrel on me!' stammered the chancellor, who was scarlet. 'I call these gentlemen to witness that it is so; why, I know not, for I never injured you!'

'You are stabbing your mother and mine to death! Is that no injury?' returned the other, sternly crossing his arms. 'If it were possible to collect the innocent blood which you have shed and are shedding into one great reservoir, your lordship

might have a good long swim in it. As wicked a game as it is short-sighted. When you guillotine a man you get rid of an individual, it's true, but you make all his friends and relations your enemies for ever.'

Things had gone too far to remain as they were. The wily chancellor, much as he deprecated appearing in open antagonism to the popular demagogue, was obliged for his own sake—for that of the Government which he represented—to take up the gauntlet which was tossed to him. If Lord Glandore, King of Cherokees, had only been present, he would have had the satisfaction of at last superintending the duel, the compromise of which, on a previous occasion, had so mortified him.

All agreed that the trifling matter had better be settled off-hand with as little delay as possible, for the shades of evening were closing in, and it is a pity that pretty bullet-practice should be spoiled by darkness. Terence of course offered himself as second to his ex-chief, while my lord beckoned to our old friend Cassidy, who happened to come upon the scene, and was only too delighted at the honour which was thus conferred by a chancellor of Ireland upon one who, however useful and fascinating, was no better socially than a 'half-mounted.'

Lord Clare proposed an immediate adjournment to Leinster Lawn, where the affair might be quietly concluded without witnesses; but his second would not hear of it. No, indeed! It was not often that he would have the opportunity of showing himself off

as best man to so high a dignitary, and was by no means inclined to hide his light under a bushel. Stephen's Green was the place, quite close and handy. Among the trees there was a splendid spot for sport. In his delight he clapped his brother second on the back, vowing that it would be only right for them to have a tilt upon their own account!

To this Terence demurred, however, marvelling why the friendly giant should show such an itching to have a shot at him. That worthy seemed singularly aggrieved at his offer being refused, but consoled himself by grumbling:

'I thought you were more game! No mather—when the principals have done, we might have a turn. I remember when Lord Mountgarret was winged at the first fire, that his son tuk his place, not to disappoint the audience. And we all thought it mighty polite and proper in the gintleman.'

CHAPTER IX.

THE DUEL.

WHEN they had had time to reflect, both combatants were equally sorry for the fracas. Curran was specially meek, and apologised humbly to his second, as they walked arm-in-arm to the trysting-place.

'Indeed, and I'm an old fool,' he admitted. 'Nothing, as you said, can come of this sort of thing but noise. I can't afford to be kilt, for I'll be wanted later.' Then a thought came as a gleam of comfort. 'If I could kill my man,' he said, 'that would be doing good service to ould Ireland. But the devil looks after his own. He's much more likely to make daylight through me.'

Lord Clare was more than annoyed; he was seriously disturbed. If he were to kill Curran, his position would be fraught with difficulty. The mob loved Curran; they would certainly tear to pieces the man who slew him. If he, by chance, escaped,

he would be able to show his face no more; and, having ceased to be useful, the authorities in London would certainly throw him over. Was this wretched little pigmy always to cross his path? Lord Clare ground out a curse, and determined (with a hasty prayer to his tutelary deity with the horns and hoofs) that if the first fire turned out harmless, he would declare his honour satisfied, and decline a second shot. Meanwhile he improved the shining moments—Cassidy having rushed off to fetch the barking-irons—by sending a special messenger to Ely Place, to order a saddled horse to be brought to the mall in Stephen's Green; a precaution in favour of escape, in case an accident should happen to the popular favourite.

Speedily as challenge had followed insult, he saw with chagrin that there was no hope of keeping the matter secret. The altercation had been witnessed by several gownsmen who happened to be passing out of the Commons, and who, rushing across the road to Trinity, had bawled to all whom it interested that 'Curran was about to pistol the chancellor to Hades.'

The news flew like wildfire from court to court, for the undergraduates bore the latter no good-will, by reason of the recent visitation. They poured out like a flock of rooks, and were already perched on wall and branch when the interested parties arrived.

There were not two opinions as to which way they hoped the affair would end. Of the chancellor's enemies among the scum, there was no slight sprink-

ling, Phil having also rushed away to announce to sundry cronies that there was going to be great sport.

Lord Clare regretted his choice of a second. He had selected him as likely to obey his principal, instead of leading him, as he had a right to do; but he reckoned without the pugnacity which underlies the Irish character, and which is certain to burst forth on the first symptom of a row. How could Cassidy guess (who was, by nature, blundering and muddle-pated), that my lord chancellor really wished to back out of his challenge? Was he not an Irishman? That he was no coward all the world knew. The giant put down his peculiar manner to an ultra-refinement of courtesy and high-breeding, and was specially anxious to allow him to air his politeness without losing a point. He was extremely obstinate, therefore, declining to listen to anything his principal proposed—so peremptorily, indeed, that he would have marvelled at his own audacity, but for a conviction that he was doing what was expected of him.

'Ground! gintlemen, ground!' he cried in delight, as a sort of salutation. 'Blow measurement! We'll hip the puny babbler, my lord! Hip him—hip—hip! Bedad, your lordship's puce silk coat is in your favour. The daylight's waning. I can hardly distinguish your figure from the grass. Sure it's dewy, and your shoes are thin. Stand on my roquelaure. 'Twill prevent your taking could!'

'Damn his officiousness!' muttered his principal, with a scowl.

Mr. Curran met with such an ovation from the heavy flight of rooks in the trees, as his small figure loomed in the twilight, that his spirits rose again. His temporary humility was gone. He, too, was a Hibernian war-horse, with a love for the clarion's bray, although his bouts were more in the way of arguments than cudgel-playing. The idea of shooting down, with his own dusky hand, Ireland's recreant son, her bitterest foe, might well raise his spirits.

Charlotte Corday, even though she did her country transcendant service, cannot be acquitted of the charge of murder. It is not *convenable* for a young lady to enter the bath-room of an unprotected gentleman, and, having lodged a knife in his flesh, to retire behind a curtain and await her fate. But here was an analogous case, without its indecorous elements. A frowsy-looking mouse had bearded a gorgeous lion, and told him the simple truth about himself, which more timorous animals were content to whisper behind his back. That lion, taking offence, had challenged his small foe to mortal combat. Well, the mouse would try to slay that lion, and, the combat being on equal terms, there was no murder about the business at all; a case of retribution, simply. David and Goliath—nothing more. Anything more *convenable* could not possibly be seen.

So Mr. Curran became quite jubilant, and seeming, to his surprise, to detect something which looked like the hesitation of fear, set himself to taunt the fine-looking gentleman opposite, who made really a

splendid appearance in his exquisitely-fitting silken clothes, with a large diamond glimmering in a soft fall of lace, another in his hat-loop; while, as for the silver-hilted *couteau de chasse* which dangled from a silver belt, nothing could be more perfect in workmanship, more chaste and elegant in design.

'Is the *State-doctor* ready?' shouted Mr. Curran, who was in highest spirits by this time, amid crows of merriment. 'Sure he's always prescribing *steel* to his patient; bad luck to him!'

'Is it steel?' retorted Cassidy, whose principal pretended not to hear. 'Here's steel for ye! The prettiest irons in all Leinster; a gift to me from Lord Glandore. Twelve inches long they are. Tear and owns! but they're lovely boys; as bright as moonbames. If they could spake, they'd thank ye for giving them their liberty. Why, they've not been aired these six weeks.'

'Take care,' Terence observed, laughing; 'the one ye're flourishing is at full-cock.'

'Then full-cock your own, and let's blaze,' retorted the other, readily; which sally produced a yell from the rookery.

'If Mr. Curran will apologise——' Lord Clare began, glancing nervously round, for it was nearly dark, and the mob was thickening fast.

'Ah! Go on, now; it's joking ye're,' shouted Cassidy, holding his sides. 'Your lordship's too polite entirely. Sure ye couldn't do it. Here are the rules laid down by the Knights of Tara, which

you know may not be broke' (taking a small manuscript book out of his voluminous breeches-pocket). 'See No. 7: "No apology can be accepted after the parties meet, without a fire." Come, gintlemin. Proceed, proceed. Ould locks—barrels and stocks! Go on, *du* now! Here are your pair of bullies, nicely primed, my lord.'

'One will be sufficient, probably,' frowned his principal.

'Rule 33,' retorted the glib fire-eater: '"You may not be satisfied till two shots are fired at least, unless the apologiser hands the other a cane and submits to a good beating."'

'That's a Galway rule, which doesn't obtain in Dublin,' Terence remarked. 'Not that my principal means to apologise; far from it.'

'Irish blackguard is one of our staple manufactures,' suggested Mr. Curran, to keep the ball rolling; but his adversary was imperturbable. He was a cur as well as a tyrant, then?

'Listen to me, my lord,' cried the sturdy advocate, crossing his arms. 'In 1173, MacMurrough betrayed the land to Strongbow, as you are betraying it now to Pitt, and received the wages of sin. Take a lesson from history. Hunted by despair, he died by his own hand. Under Henry II. England and Ireland were for a moment one. But England grew sick of the faint smell of the shambles, and abandoned her slave. Much good did that Union do!'

Lord Clare was stung to desperation. Openly

to talk of a Union at this juncture might be productive of incalculable harm.

'Make haste, make haste!' he said pettishly. 'We don't want all the metropolis to look at us.'

The first shot did no mischief. The chancellor fired wide, his wandering bullet creating a transitory excitement in a knot of bystanders. Mr. Curran's pierced his adversary's coat.

'The devil looks after his own, I might have known it,' he muttered, tossing away one pistol and raising the other. 'The gentleman stands too far off. Let him come closer. I can't see him.'

Lord Clare approached nearer, and again fired wildly; while his opponent was so diabolically deliberate, that he could not help observing through the stillness of expectation: 'It won't be your fault if you don't kill me, Curran!'

'Did ye ever hear tell of Moran's collar?' inquired the advocate, as, closing one eye and screwing up his mouth into an O, he covered the chancellor. 'It was worn by justices in ould days, and had the wondrous property of contracting or relaxing according to his just or unjust conduct. How mightily it would have choked your lordship!'

Curran fired at last. The chancellor staggered, but recovered himself.

'A hit!' shouted Curran.

'A hit, a hit!' yelled the rooks, in the gathering darkness. One piping bird-voice cried above the rest, 'Moiley shall eat him!'

A multitude of friends vied with each other in

sympathy for the chancellor. Cassidy supported him, despite his struggles, on his knee, while one ripped open his small clothes and another produced a probe.

On the fair skin there was a dark mark—a tiny trickle of blood like a pin's scratch. The sight of it produced a murmur of astonishment. Lord Clare could conceal his fury no longer.

'Damn you all! Damn you, I say! for a pack of donkeys!' he cried, almost foaming. 'It's the gingerbread nuts that I eat in the long debate—they've saved me from a bullet-wound—there—laugh away, and get you gone—I've danced too long already to your asinine piping!'

'One more blaze, my lord?' coaxed Cassidy, unconvinced, amid general tittering.

But he was not long unconvinced. He saw *that* in his principal's eye which reduced him to lowliness at once, and he bowed his head as the wounded warrior quoted with majesty Rule 22:

'"If a wound agitates the nerves and makes the hand shake, the business must end for that day at least." The gingerbread nuts have made my hand shake: at all events you may take it so, if you please. Provoke me no longer—clear away this rabble of idiots at once, or I tell you plainly, Mr. Cassidy, that you'll be sorry for it.'

The giant could not but perceive that his principal really was frantic, and hastened to obey his behests.

'Well, well,' he meditated. 'I'd rather be badly

wounded than be saved by gingerbread nuts! It's an ignominious accident, and laughable, and the chancellor cannot bear being laughed at.'

Cassidy busied himself in 'claring the coorse,' as he termed it; and while he did so, the aggrieved chancellor watched him with a sullen and lowering gaze. It was quite dark by this time.

'Terence,' he said presently, with unaccustomed kindness in his voice, 'come hither. You dislike me, I know; and no wonder, prejudiced as you necessarily are by the company you choose to keep. Yet, for your mother's sake, I fain would be your friend. You are a plucky fellow. I honour pluck, and genuinely like you, for yourself, in spite of you. I'm not so bad as I'm painted. Few people are. I'll give you a bit of advice. Act on it.'

Curran approached to listen (comforted, though he had not killed his enemy, by the axiom he was so fond of quoting, that the devil, who is more powerful than the best of men, looks after his own). He was amazed to behold quite a human look on the dragon's face. The toothsome smile, so redolent of falseness, was gone; the hatchet lines had curled themselves up into a mask which really resembled *bonhomie*. Can grapes grow on thistles? Was it possible that this adamantine nature could be softened? Wonders will never cease, although some people do say that there's nothing new under the sun. Curran listened, trying to follow the direction of those wandering eyes in the obscurity which he could not pierce.

'Terence,' the chancellor said, 'you have a foe —unscrupulous and bitter—who will ruin you if possible. I know not why. Be very careful, or you will come to ruin. One foe in the dark is worse than a score by day. You have slighted that enemy somehow. You are on the edge of quicksand; once beyond the brink, you must be swallowed up. For your dear mother's sake I will save you while I can. But I may not be here always. A thousand things might happen. It's due to her as well as to yourself to keep yourself free from obloquy. Think how her pride would suffer. Take off that ridiculous necktie.'

Honest Phil was also listening with craned neck and goggle eyes.

'It must be Biddy. She hates Master Terence, does she?' he muttered to himself. 'Why? maybe she thought him comely, and he would have naught to do wid her, being so tight entranced by Mistress Doreen, God bless her! Faix, she's a bad lot—taking to sodgers! And I thought her fit for Paradise. I saw her just now by the quickset beyant, in her velvet hat and feathers, and my lord saw her too, no doubt. I'll tell the masther who 'tis that's working the mischief, and set his mind at rest.'

'Half-confidences are worse than none, my lord,' blurted out Curran. 'If you'd really do the lad a turn, speak out. Why give him a nut to crack?'

'Betwixt you and me, sir,' Clare said with hauteur, 'there can be nothing but animosity. I

try to make things as pleasant as I can, and you publicly insult me. I purposely fire wide; you try all you know to kill me. I would gladly have been your friend.'

'Begorra! such a friend,' growled Curran, 'as I'd help out of mee cabin with mee boot! But never mind us. We're talking of this lad. Who's his enemy—who is it that's playing devil's capers among honest men? We know that they're not all saints who use holy water!'

Lord Clare was still looking away into the darkness, while Phil followed the direction of his glance, and said nothing.

'Don't press him,' Terence said, with coldness as chilling as the chancellor's. 'If he chooses to make confession for conscience' sake, so be it—I will be under no personal obligation to his clemency.'

'Silly boy! I want to save you, and, like the other asses, you pose and mouth heroics!' Clare said impatiently. 'Your name was on the list of those scatter-brains who were caged to-day, but I struck it through with my own pen. Yet I tell you fairly that if you commit yourself beyond a certain point, I shall be powerless to protect you. I should bring more odium than I dare upon the Government, if I were instrumental in stringing up a lot who deserve the rope, and saving the worst of all because he happened to be my old friend's son. I can't do more than I am doing. Even Mr. Curran here should tell you that. I tell you that you have

an enemy who would gladly destroy you. You must guess who it is. Who is there whom you have injured? I tell you further that Lord Camden has signed a warrant for your arrest, which I believe is in his bureau. He deplores with me that one of the aristocracy should be a cause of scandal. But he may be called upon to permit execution of that warrant, and, acting as you do, I don't see how he can refuse to let justice take its course. Had you no enemy it might probably lie snug enough. But that enemy will ferret it out ere long, I fear. My boy, I earnestly implore you to leave the country. Every port shall be left open. Go to Paris—Vienna—Rome—anywhere. If you are short of funds I will provide them—come! I would so gladly see you gone,' he concluded after a pause, during which Terence's heart was touched, and Curran stared at this new aspect of the lord chancellor. 'For if I mistake not, such events will happen here ere long as will cause the best-balanced mind to quake.'

What a pity that he uttered those last few words! Curran beheld again the well-known Lord Clare. Terence became hot with resentment.

'If you are preparing a St. Bartholomew,' he said, 'why should I be specially favoured? Murderer!'

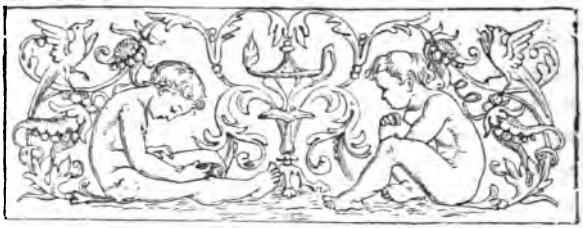
'Murderer?' echoed Curran, with a scorn which incensed the chancellor. 'Worse than murderer! Common butcher of your fellows! You have netted the leaders—you will goad the leaderless sheep to leap after them. You will drive them

to rise against you. Then you'll massacre them for rising. You'll turn your artillery against the helpless peasants. You'll mow them down like grass. You know their peculiarities—so far you are Irish. With a cudgel or a shillalagh there's none can beat 'em. But they're bad at firearms. Firearms! The use of gunpowder's been forbidden them for ever so many years!'

'On my honour, it's provoking to save people despite themselves,' affirmed the exasperated chancellor. 'If the boy's hanged it'll be your fault, Curran.'

'I wish for no mercy,' said moody Terence, 'from such hands as yours, my lord. I remember Orr. So will you on your death-bed. Here comes Cassidy again. Come, Mr. Curran, we'll stroll to his chambers for a glass of claret.'

The trio departed together arm-in-arm, and Lord Clare looked after their retreating figures with extreme vexation as, mounting his horse, he rode slowly to Ely Place.



CHAPTER X.

THE BIRD AND THE FOWLER.

THE three allies retired to Cassidy's chambers, to laugh at their ease over Lord Clare's discomfiture.

'Bedad! he's losing his nerve,' Cassidy asserted, as he poured a ruby bumper down his throat. 'Did ye see how wild he aimed—like a gossoon that had never blazed? Maybe he's of the same kidney as the spalpeen in the play who betune the sheets is frighted by the Banshees.'

'Richard the Third at Bosworth?' suggested Mr. Curran. 'If he gets his deserts the chancellor's death-bed will be a fearsome spectacle.'

'It must be an awful thing to have innocent blood upon your conscience,' Terence mused. 'Yet how many are there among us now whose arms are steeped in it to the shoulder! Is it not strange that confessions of murder are nearly always of some single case? Wholesale murderers don't seem

to be so troubled. The heart must be callous, I suppose, before it becomes capable of wholesale murder. Hence Shakespeare was wrong as to his ghosts on Bosworth Field. Richard slept undisturbed the sleep of the infantine and just.'

Cassidy seized the bottle, and poured himself out another bumper. 'I hate this city at night!' he said. 'Since General Lake's curfew order, it is like a sepulchre. I vow it's pleasant to hear the patrol, or the jolly sodger-boys returning home. What, Mr. Curran, are you off? These are ticklish times for night-journeys. Be not too venturesome. Better stop here. Sure I'll be glad to give you hospitality till morning.'

'And leave my Primrose to fret alone at home? No, thank you. She'll be dying to hear how her favourite is going on. I must say I'm as relieved as she can be that he should leave for England. One half-fledged victim saved at any rate out of the nest from the maw of Moiley.'

'What was Lord Clare talking of when I came up?' asked the giant, abruptly.

'He was advising this imprudent young gentleman to make for other shores,' grunted Curran, strapping on spatterdashes for his ride; 'and he was right.'

'You know you don't think so in your heart,' Terence retorted. 'With Tom Emmett and others at Kilmainham, it is more necessary than ever that Cassidy here and I should be vigilant. We've put our hands to the rudder, you know. We must

summon hither some of the head men from Cork, at once. If Cassidy agrees with me, we'll write the letters before morning. It is essential that the gaps in the central committee should be filled up.'

'Can't you see how you are playing into their hands? Poor flies, whose feet stick in the web!' Curran sneered. 'You break from one mesh to catch in the next. Each time you break away, the struggle becomes harder; because the spider gums his lines, and your legs are sticky with the gluten! Little by little, by small crafty hawls, the executive are draining the society of all its master-minds. When they shall be safely snared; when no leaders with any pretension to worth are left, then they'll bring about a rising. The plan shows intimate knowledge of Irish nature capped by British phlegm. It's enough to make a man with his wits about him pitch himself headlong down the nearest well.'

'We will be very prudent,' Terence said. 'Yet of what avail is prudence with secret sleuthhounds on our track?'

Honest Phil, who had been squatting in a corner on the floor, with his gaze fixed upon his master, could bear this talk no longer.

'Faix! it's meeself that knows who 'tis. Ochone! sad's the day, I know it,' he murmured in the voice of tribulation.

The three turned eagerly round. 'You know who 'tis!' they cried out in chorus.

Then Phil related all he knew of Biddy—interlarding the narrative with many groans, in that the

golden-tressed darling of his heart should, by turning out such a shocking monster, seem to impugn his taste.

Cassidy emptied the claret bottle, then flung it on the ground in his boisterous way—swearing, with ogrish snapping of the jaws, that he'd be even with the traitress; that he would throttle her with his own big fingers.

Knitting his brows Mr. Curran walked up and down, his hands behind his back. Terence stared at his henchman, bewildered by this new light.

After a pause Mr. Curran spoke. 'Phil's right and wrong,' he said. 'The woman may have betrayed much. But now her teeth are drawn—that's as regards the present, I mean. What a labyrinth it is! She may rake up old stories of the past, of which "juries of the right sort" will make the properest use—but she can tell nothing that has happened since the "Irish Slave" was burnt.'

'Her mother Jug Coyle's still living at the Little House,' Cassidy suggested; 'maybe she——'

'Impossible. We know now that after the destruction of the shebeen this precious young lady went to live in barracks with the soldiers.'

'Murther! and I've kissed her often,' the giant sighed with contrition, as though by that unlucky fact virtue must have gone out of him.

'Anyways,' added Terence, 'she could never have had a hand in the arrest at Cutpurse Row. Somebody supplied a list of delegates. Who was it? It's terrible not to know!'

'Therein lies the hopelessness of the whole affair,' declared Mr. Curran, preparing to depart. 'Blind-man's-buff's nothing to it. With such wriggling in the grass it's simply putting honest heads into the wild beast's mouth for nothing. I won't say what I should think about it were circumstances otherwise. But as the wretched case stands, it would be a great load off my mind, my dear boy, if you were out of the *bagarre.*'

Cassidy scrutinised the face of Terence narrowly, who wore a look of moody uncertainty. 'Councillor Curran's right,' he said at length. 'Better show a clean pair of heels, and save your neck.'

The young man glanced up in anger, and the other smiled with a good-humoured nod.

'It was kind of Lord Clare,' Curran went on, walking hither and thither, much perturbed—'it certainly was kind of him to speak as he did. Maybe he's not so bad as I think. If so, the Lord forgive me! That there should be a warrant for you ready signed is not surprising. Warrants are pretty nearly dead letters just now, but it would not do to kidnap the brother of Lord Glandore without proper authority; and this secret foe that he spoke about is too sharp to do things unwarily. Once taken, your life's not worth a pin's fee with the Staghouse crew, ready to swear anything, and some one prepared to dictate. Who have ye ever injured, Terence?—think.'

'My Lord Clare said all that!' exclaimed Cassidy, disconcerted. Plunging his hands deep

in his breeches-pockets, he whistled 'The Sword' softly to himself, while an expression of concern puckered his jolly lineaments.

'The hopes of the society will centre on you now,' the giant observed presently. 'As it is, the peculiarity of the attitude ye have taken these several months past, combined with your exalted rank, makes your position dangerous. The society'll look to you, now that Emmett and the rest are gone. Though all my heart's with it, it's little real use myself'll be, worse luck—I'm stupid. Theobald told me so. Tom Emmett's often called me a blundering booby.'

This confession was made with such deprecating humility that Terence was touched, and held out his hand.

'You wrong yourself,' he said. 'Cheer up. We'll stand by each other. But I'm not above taking good advice.'

'Ye'll go?' his two friends said, in different cadence.

'No, no!' replied Terence. 'That may not be. It's plain my duty's here, and here I'll remain. But Emmett and the others were foolhardy; for the future I'll keep myself concealed. We'll knead together a new directory at once. A great responsibility has fallen on my shoulders for which I am not fitted; yet I'll do my best, and play my part as others do. It is possible, as you say, that the delegates will look up to me. They'll want to be kept together—no easy task. Would that Miss Wolfe were here to help!' he concluded, sighing.

A malignant shadow flitted across the giant's face, and faded. 'Hide!' he echoed, with a bluntness which sounded a little like a taunt. 'Where can ye hide, and Sirr not find ye?'

'I'll go home to Strogue to-morrow, and then——'

'The first place they would go to if you were wanted,' objected Curran.

'Only to look over some papers and destroy them. I know of a safe place where they'll not find me.'

'Ah!' exclaimed the giant, with a tinge of curiosity, 'and you've papers to destroy at Strogue?'

'Here is a scheme I've drawn out for the capture of Dublin. The lords of the Privy Council——'

'Put it away!' roared the choleric little lawyer. 'Is it the back of me ye want to see? I won't know these things, since I still wear the King's silk gown, yet ye're for ever flourishing them under my nose!'

In a tantrum Mr. Curran departed, like a small snuff-scented whirlwind, accompanied by Phil, who went to fetch his horse.

Terence and Cassidy exchanged glances, and burst into peals of laughter.

'What a character it is!' Cassidy declared, as he busied himself with the brewing of cold punch—a grave matter, in which his companion too was soon equally engrossed.

'A good brew,' Terence announced, presently, amid solemn silence. 'We'll sit up all night, for

there's much to be done. To-morrow I shall vanish from the world—in the body.'

'It's curious that you should ever have turned Croppy, Master Terence,' the giant mused, as with cuffs turned up he peeled the lemons. 'You—a member of the Englishry, who may become my Lord Glandore to-morrow—fond as his lordship is of fighting. But then, of course, ye'd change your politics. Sure your head'll come to be worth a big lot, if the rising doesn't succeed—a power of money, surelie!'

'But it *shall* succeed!' returned Terence, cheerily, 'Then it will be our turn to offer rewards. What will Lord Clare be worth, think you?'

'He'll never fly,' asserted the giant, eyeing his punch with lazy satisfaction. 'When Ould Ireland's fought her fight and conquered, we'll find he's died game in the streets somewhere. His behaviour on the Green to-night was quare, though —devilish quare!—It's absent in the body ye say ye'll be?' he asked, after a pause; 'but present in the spirit, I hope, for Erin's sake?'

'Never fear! One more glass of punch, and then to work. You think the first place Sirr would look for me would be at Strogue? But if, seeing the danger, I had fled from Strogue? Where would he search for me then? In the liberties about St. Patrick's—the Wicklow Hills—anywhere but in the neighbourhood of Strogue. Yet no neighbourhood could be so convenient. Men go fishing there in little boats, and may land from time to time with-

out causing suspicion. If there was an alarm, it would be strange if I could not conceal myself among the rocks, or get across to Ireland's Eye, and baffle pursuers somehow till I was fetched away.'

'It's a pity, councillor, that the shebeen was burnt!'

'Better than the shebeen, old friend! Now I'll tell you a secret. You can keep a secret? Of course you can, for my sake and that of the good cause. That old figure of fun, Mrs. Gillin—whom my mother hates, for some odd reason—has, for some other odd reason, taken a fancy to me. That's funny, isn't it? She told me one day, that if ever I needed help which she could give, I might rely on her. Now where could I better conceal myself than at the Little House? It's within easy access of Dublin. No one is aware that I even know her, for we haven't exchanged more than half a dozen words in our lives. Though she's a Catholic, her daughter isn't; and, being anxious to make that young person my Lady Glandore, she naturally is interested in the aristocratic party. At the same time she feels the position of her co-religionists. I've been credibly informed so. Isn't that a good idea? Her place is in a manner sacred. She's a friend of all the judges.'

Cassidy ruminated, and whistled a soft air.

'A capital idea indeed! Then ye'll disappear, and I'll not see ye, maybe, for months—that is, till the signal's given.'

'How so?'

'Madam Gillin and I aren't friends. She'd not like to see me hanging about her doors. It wouldn't be prudent, neither. You'll be afther playing your big part while I play my little one. I'm right with the Castle people, as yourself knows well. Sirr likes me, so does Secretary Cooke. I'll ingratiate myself still more wid 'em. When the signal comes, maybe we might take the lord-lieutenant in his bed. It's worth considering. Anyhow, I'd better seem cool with the society. I won't come to the Little House. Don't talk to her of me —'twould vex the mistress.'

Terence trimmed the lamp, knitting his brows the while.

'I hardly like your intimacy with the Castle-folk,' he said. 'It seems scarcely manly to worm out their secrets under a mask of friendship.'

Cassidy burst into one of his great laughs.

'Oh murther, Master Terence!' he cried, wiping the tears from his eyes. 'Ye'll never win Erin's battles if ye're so lofty. We must fight men wid their own weapons if we'd beat 'em. That's true generalship. They set their spies on us. We set ours on them. That's quits, I know, though I am a booby. Take your pen now. Here's a list of the country delegates: mark out who ye think'll be best, while I brew another bowl.'

'No more, Cassidy, my friend! Let's keep our heads clear for business.'

'Be aisy! One more'll do neither of us harm.'

It was five o'clock before Terence was satisfied with his work. He had a task which was uncongenial to his habits, for he was more skilful with the rod or gun than with ink; and it was a matter of grievous slavery and toil to draw up a series of letters, such as should explain clearly to the country leaders of the United Irishmen the full bearing of the late disaster.

Tom Emmett, Neilson, Russell, Bond, were in duress. A temporary arrangement must be come to, lest the French should arrive and find the patriots chaotic. No time was to be lost, for they might appear at any moment, when it would be above all things needful that French and Irish should be prepared to act in concert without loss of time. He, the writer (old college-friend as they knew of the incarcerated leaders, late special envoy also to France), was willing to co-operate with the rest in forming a provisional committee, etc., etc.

Wearied and worn out with the unaccustomed mental effort, he dropped the pen at last from his stiffened fingers, and, wrapping his riding-cloak around him, sank well-nigh at once into deep slumber; while Cassidy, instead of following so good an example, placed the bundle of letters in his long-flapped pocket, and stood for a minute looking down upon the sleeper.

'The dark colleen may never be mine,' he muttered between his teeth, while he wagged his bullet-head; 'but she'll not be yours neither, my fine fellar!' Then, peering out into the silent

street which was paling wan in the early dawn, he stole forth on tiptoe, over the body of Phil, lying prostrate across the passage, and opening the door stealthily, made the best of his way towards the Castle.

The day was half spent before Terence woke. The giant, who could turn his hand to most things, washed and aglow with health, was busily preparing breakfast: broiling steaks over a fire, fussing hither and thither as merry as a grig, assisted by Phil, who was kept on the broad grin by his lively sallies.

'The commander-in-chief of the national army is taking it out of Murphy while he can!' he roared in his jolly voice. 'Well, let him lie, God bless him! By-and-by it's little he'll see of Murphy—riding about all night along the ranks to encourage his troops for the battle. What! awake, Master Terence? I've bin up this long while. Your letters are on the road. I've tidied up the room, and opened some tipple for your meal. What'll I get from ye, gineral? Is it your *eu-de-shamp* that ye'll be making me? It's glad I'll be of the office. I've bad news, though, for ye too. I met Sirr just now, who was on the prowl. The French expedition's come to grief again! No mather! we'll fight now for ourselves—bad luck to the mounseers, they are chicken-hearted! That at least is the official news, arrived from London a few hours ago.'

Terence rubbed his eyes and stared, unable on

first awaking to realise such disastrous intelligence. Then he dipped his head in a basin of water which Phil presented to him, tidied his dress, combed out his long hair, and caught it back with a ribbon in the accustomed manner. After that he set to work upon a luscious steak with the energy of youth, and washed it down with claret, while Cassidy, too, made pretty play with knife and fork—both of them too preoccupied for speech.

Another French fiasco! How strangely fortune favoured England! This time the fleets had remained weather-bound, unable to start at all until the golden moments were gone—till opportunity had slid into the past. It was too bad. Terence's blood boiled whilst he assuaged his tremendous appetite—so did Cassidy's, finding vent as usual in loud oaths and noisy execrations.

After breakfast the two shook hands and parted—when to meet again?—when and how?—under what strangely altered auspices? It was agreed that the members of the new Directory should communicate in the first instance with Terence, in person, somewhere on the shore near the Little House where he was to hide. The letters would speedily reach their destinations, Cassidy assured him. This new turn of events might induce Government to take active measures of some kind. What would they do? Repent them of their evil ways and take to leniency, or, thinking they had their victim quite at their mercy, still further goad and harass her? What would Terence's private

enemy do—he of whom my Lord Clare so mysteriously spoke?

With so many spies about, it was almost inevitable that the active part that the young councillor was playing would become known to Government. Would they wink at this backsliding of an aristocrat—or would they make an example of him by putting a heavy price upon his head? Be that as it might, it would never do, in Cassidy's opinion, for him to share the fate of Emmett and the others. The giant was vehement on this point. He must go into hiding forthwith, and employ the most extreme precautions lest Sirr should discover his lair. Cassidy, being known as his friend, would make a point of never taking the air in that direction. He would hang about the Castle ostentatiously, and report what he might have to say to some prominent member of the society, who would take up his abode in Dublin. Indeed he thought it would be wise to abuse the society in public—to declare that once he had been seduced by specious argument into joining it, but that now he saw the error of his ways, and sang 'Peccavi.'

Much as he disliked his method, Terence was obliged to confess that the giant was right, and felt at the same time a small internal marvelling in that he was really shrewd and rather astute—by no means the hopeless bungler that Emmett had considered him.

He took hearty leave of his friend, and, accompanied by Phil, made the best of his way to

Strogue. It was a gloomy place to live alone in, as he had discovered since the departure of the family. Even his brother's sneers and his mother's coldness were better than this chilling solitude. He lived at this time in his own little chambers in the 'young men's wing' under the armoury, gaining access to them by his own private door, so that the Abbey was to all intents and purposes shut up, being only inhabited by a few old retainers who dwelt away over the stable-yard at the other side of the house. To his dismay his things had been disturbed—he detected the fact at once. By whom? How tiresome old family servants are! Disobeying orders, they will rummage and clean by fits and starts, regardless of the havoc they innocently make. Then Terence remembered that neither old Kathy nor her spouse, Tim the coachman, were more given to cleanliness than Irish domestics usually are.

This must have been a sudden and most inconvenient gush of virtue! He would at once give Tim and Kathy a vigorous bit of his mind. They should be convinced for ever after that obedience is the most cardinal of all the virtues as far as servants are concerned, standing indeed before cleanliness. They should shiver and quake in their shoes after the jobation their young master would administer. But instead of quaking they both lifted up their voices and howled, swearing that young masther was distraught. Go among his bits of things indeed! Not they. Sorra a haporth of dusting had they

done. Why should they, since master agreed with them that it was waste of labour? Kathy had stepped in to make the bed, but finding it undisturbed, had stepped out again at once. Then somebody else must have been there. Who could have an interest in the few scraps of property which were of no value at all except to their owner? The fishing-rods were overset—the cupboards had been rifled—the precious collection of hackles (apple of Phil's eye) were strewn on the floor as if somebody had been in haste, searching for some special object which he could not find.

The owner of the treasures began to look grave. Who would steal his things—things moreover which were not worth stealing? None of the peasantry about. Irish peasants, though they will pick off their man blithely from behind a stone, are little given to petty pilfering.

Terence looked around, and his heart beat fast. Nothing had been taken except—his papers! Rough drafts of manifestoes, over which, in the hot zeal of youth, he had consumed the oil of midnight. Projects for the capture of the gaols —rough plans; the very documents which, being compromising and not particularly useful, he had come hither to destroy. How silly and imprudent not to have destroyed them sooner!

Sirr for months past had been in the habit of making forcible entries into houses, on the chance of unearthing treason. What more likely than that he should think of making a perquisition upon

Councillor Crosbie, who flaunted his opinions before the world in the outward form of a green tabinet neckerchief? Fool—babyish dolt! Idiot! Every one had spoken about that necktie. In a passion he tore it from his throat, and hurled it out of the open window. Conduct more childish still! The evil was done. Could it be remedied? His smooth forehead puckered itself into wrinkles as he strove to remember what the bundle of documents contained. Three forms of manifesto—to be printed and placarded so soon as Dublin should be taken. The rules and regulations of the society. A memorandum of prominent members—oh, horror! He knew he had been suspected of treachery by some. This list, incautiously kept, might bring about the death of many. Would he not be guilty, by gross carelessness, of their murder? Would they not have a right to curse him as they swung?

For a while his spirit was invaded by the same rush of unworthiness which had so unnerved Tom Emmett when he was arrested. He too felt the bitter sense of upbraiding humiliation with which Tom had asked himself what right had one, who was incapable of common prudence, to traffic thus rashly with the lives of other men? Do his duty! Was it his duty to put himself forward in this affair, or was it merely a culpable personal vanity disguised as self-sacrifice? He strove earnestly to settle that question—so earnestly that Phil, who watched him, was aghast at his distress, and endeavoured by humble barks and frolicking to cheer his master

from the dumps. To no purpose. With grief be it admitted that his master cursed him roundly, abused him with such unnecessary harshness that the poor fellow slunk away with tears in his eyes, under pretence of fetching the green kerchief. Big drops of sweat stood on the young man's brow. His brains had never in all his years been so tried as during the last few months. Only those usually unused to thought can tell of the dreadful addled feeling of helplessness which comes upon the muddled intellect during its first feeble struggles into work.

After a time he grew calmer, as the one bright point stood out distinctly. It was not the vanity of power—the attribute of Jack-in-office, which had galvanised his careless nature into serious purpose. Look at it how he would, he was clearly above such meanness. He had no personal ambition—that was what Doreen had constantly dinned into his ears with scorn—and he had wished that, to please her, he could have become ambitious. But it was out of the question. He liked the world—its bright sun, its flowers, its myriad life—but with no desire for exclusive possession of its delights. He was not discontented with his lot, even though his brother was rude sometimes, and his mother cold and unaffectionate. His only troubles had been his trivial debts; they alone had stirred his brains to scheming, and he had borne them good-humouredly as his share of the ills of life. He thought Doreen bewitching—deliriously delightful. Her he would

fain possess as his own—his very own. There was nothing specially ambitious in that; for the lowly sparrow, as well as the stately fowl of Cochin, is justified in seeking out a mate—the best who will accept him. No; he was indolently, comfortably content to take the world as he found it, making excuses for its bumps, palliating its disagreeables —until that time when his eyes had been opened as though scales had fallen from them. Since then he was an altered man; sobered by the shock of suddenly perceiving the precipice on which his country stood. At first he had refused to gauge the depth of the abyss; it was so much pleasanter to turn aside to dally with the flowers. Then the upright courage which had hitherto lain dormant spoke, bidding him mark Erin's loveliness—commanding him to stretch out his hand to stay her tottering form, whispering sternly that if she fell before his eyes without an effort made to save, the guilt of her shattered limbs would haunt him for evermore.

No! His conscience absolved him of personal ambition. If Erin were saved through his agency he would be content to retire again into the background—well-paid by her grateful smile. His error had been great, because its consequences might be serious. But humanity is prone to error. Youth must learn experience by stumbling. A man must expect to receive many stabs who fights with a concealed enemy. He must practise prudence, make no movement without exceeding caution; but at the best

what a disheartening conflict—what a one-sided fight!

Terence had received two blows this very day. France could not be depended on for help. Twice within less than a year had she made herself a laughing-stock. And now—this capture of his papers, which, if the foe were relentless, would compromise him hopelessly. It was more than ever needful to conceal himself, if his life were to be of real use before he laid it down. Trouble seasons the character quickly. The young man was already beginning to calculate expediencies with gravity and precision. If he was spared, time might make of him a valuable champion.

He whistled Phil, who came up fawning like a hound that is forgiven.

'Follow me. And whatever you do, keep your tongue within your teeth,' he said. Then calling Kathy, he flung to her the key of his little door, remarking that he was called to Cork on business, and might be long detained. If my lady should write (alas! she never wrote) the letters might wait.

Then, followed by his faithful henchman who shouldered his fire-iron as though meaning business, he turned out of the great gate up the by-lane which led, before meandering elsewhere, to the back-entrance of the Little House; rung the bell, and waited to see the mistress.

Madam Gillin answered it in person, bedizened in a weird wrapper, a wisp of soiled crape wound

over the curl-papers about her head and under her chin like a cerecloth. Her sleeves were tucked up above the elbow. In her hand she bore a rolling-pin; her fingers wore a cuticle of dough. Expressing no surprise, she remarked simply:

'I expected you before this. There is no one in the house but myself, Norah, and the collough, my ould nurse. She's to be trusted. Ye're welcome, and your man. Come here, Norah; kiss your brother-in-law as will be some day. You may kiss me too, for I mean to be your aunt-in-law. Look me in the eyes. A handsome fellar! I know more of you than ye'll ever know yourself, unless the Holy Mother wills it. Come in, for we may be watched; and bar the door.'

CHAPTER XI.

THE RISING OF THE TEMPEST.

NOTHING could be kinder than the stout homely lady's treatment of her guest. He seemed to have a sad sort of fascination for her. He caught her watching him sometimes with a queer expression of pity, which broke into amicable grins and head-shakings so soon as she found herself detected. Norah, too, turned out to be a good-natured, unpretentious creature.

On the whole, Terence was not surprised at his brother's choice, considering what a terror that truculent individual betrayed for high-bred damosels, and how little he was able to appreciate the refined fascinations of the haughty, calm Doreen.

'It stood to reason,' so Terence argued, 'that if he were blind to the existence of a divinity who, in semblance of a mortal maid, abode by his fireside,

then, of course, his senses must be gross, and nothing would suit him but a house-wench.'

Despite the draggled ball-room finery in which Norah elected to array herself for breakfast, in honour of the guest, he could not but perceive that she was no better than a serving-wench in mistress's attire. But then she was a cheery, pleasant house-wench, instead of a designing, cross one, as might have been the case. So he clasped her to his bosom, and the twain were soon fast friends.

In the kitchen things did not go so smoothly. Phil's orders were that he must never go out by daylight; so he sat in the kitchen all day long, staring at Jug Coyle, the collough, who sat muttering and growling as she stared at him.

For many years, when mistress of the 'Irish Slave,' Jug had nourished a resentment against this unoffending youth, shaking a lean fist at him as he passed her door, muttering a curse when he called in for 'the laste taste in life of the craythe r.'

Why? Because she was a collough and he a farrier; or, if he wasn't, why should he wield a firing-iron? Colloughs have always hated farriers, time out of mind, because they are rival practitioners in the art of medicine, and the colloughs nourish a vague belief that, in the days of the Round Towers, the herbalists were lady-doctors, and that they enjoyed an undisputed sway over both kine and gentlefolk until Crummell introduced the veterinary as a special branch of Æsculapian science.

He tried to ingratiate himself with the old dame

by playing Peter to her Nurse; but she scorned to be so wheedled, remarking curtly, when he was particularly civil:

'The curse of Crummell light on yez, breed, seed, and branch, ye villainous cow-doctor. The Lord planted our cures in the fields before there was no 'pothecaries.'

Which remark being usually irrelevant, not to say incomprehensible, he met it by a good-tempered nod, which brought the irate lady to the extreme of patience.

The days dragged on thus but slowly. Madam Gillin was a strange mixture of bravery and pusillanimity. As we have seen, she stood in terror of a particular gentleman, because he had discovered that she took her Protestant child to mass, and had threatened to expose the awful secret. Such a matter would disturb no one at the present day; but at that time it was a heinous sin, which would have pointed the sinner out for some practical joking on the part of the Protestant squireens. At the same time she fearlessly harboured one who was a marked man, upon whose head shortly a price might be set, who might drag her with him to ruin, if the worst came to the worst; and all because she had sworn an oath once to a dying paramour, and had watched, with anger mingled with sorrow, the career of the child she had promised to protect.

Knowing Ireland's wrongs better than he did, and learning from hearsay how proud-stomached a boy he was, she had always dreaded that which

actually came to pass. She and Curran agreed that it would be deplorable if he joined the popular party; but as both secretly leaned in that direction, they could not discountenance him for having the courage to maintain, in face of danger, what they felt to be the rightful cause. For all their sakes, however, she acted with feminine tact. She kept him a close prisoner in a garret while it was day, sitting alone herself in the garden during fine weather, where all who passed along the high-road might perceive a strange figure they were little likely to forget. At night she took him out under personal escort to take the air, bidding Phil march forty yards in front and whistle at the first hint of danger, while Norah fulfilled the same office behind; Jug meanwhile being strictly enjoined to allow no strange foot to cross the threshold, under any pretence whatever.

In the course of these walks they wandered by the shore, coming quite accidentally, sometimes, upon a group of fishermen, who bowed to the young man with respect, and conversed with him in long and earnest whispers. It transpired by-and-by that some of the ubiquitous informers were beginning to turn their attention to the rage for fishing which seemed to have arisen about Strogue Point. Then Madam Gillin forbade even the solace of these nocturnal wanderings.

It became known that many of the marked ones were journeying to and fro, in a suspicious and mysterious manner, between Wexford and Dublin

and the adjacent districts. It also became a matter of public scandal that the object of the journeys was to commune with a personage of rank, the only one who dared to prefer his country to his class. Unwise conspirators began to babble of a lordling who would shortly lead them to certain victory—who, English though he might be by lineage, did not forget how many centuries of sojourn bound his family to the sister island. They spoke with gratitude and pride of this *rara avis*, all the more incautiously, perhaps, because they knew him to be safely hidden beyond the ken of Sirr and of his blood-hounds.

Now as week followed week, and month glided after month, it chanced that my Lord Clare departed to the bath of Harrogate to drink the waters for his health. By a singular coincidence, Mr. Pitt also travelled thitherward. It was, of course, a coincidence; but folks did say—well, no matter what they said.

When Lord Clare returned to the Irish metropolis, he discovered, with concern, that the secret committee of Lords—the Wehmgericht who still performed in the shadow unholy and illegal deeds—had requested the Viceroy to issue a certain warrant.

Lord Camden, rather pleased for once to act upon his separate account, mumbled that the lords were quite right to keep their own nest clean; that it was shocking to think that one of their body should so fearfully misbehave himself. He went further.

Other younger sons of an adventurous turn might follow this pernicious example. Not only must he be taken forthwith, but must also be made an example of. His brother might object possibly —that nice loyal young nobleman, who had assisted in building many Martello towers; but his outcry, should he presume to make one, must be stopped by timely courtesy. The Glandores of Strogue were earls; why should they not be created marquises?

So my Lord Camden delivered the warrant, which had for long been lying in his escritoire, to Major Sirr, and offered, as well, a reward of a thousand guineas for the culprit, alive or dead.

Quite a tremor went through both Houses. One of the nobles! This was serious. A few thousand peasants, more or less, mattered to nobody; but it was a pity to touch the *noblesse*. Then they talked of Lafayette, who was a marquis, whilst this was only an earl's younger son, and soon felt quite comfortable; even applauded the Viceroy's timely severity.

Lord Clare was more troubled, when he learned these things, than his enemies would have deemed possible. He wrote to his dear old friend at Glasaitch-é, bidding her not grieve too much. It was done in his absence. He dared not openly interfere in favour of her misguided son, but would make a personal request to Mr. Pitt to urge his Majesty to clemency. He had done much work for Mr. Pitt (forgetting to state how dirty that work

was); and no doubt his boon would be granted. If not, still must his loving mother not despair. Prison bars might be sawn; turnkeys were very short-sighted. There were boats about, and men to man them.

He never doubted for a moment that the reward would be claimed. How blind both Curran and his *protégé* had been not to guess his transparent riddle! My lady wrote back in course of time, deploring, in bitter terms, the blow which had befallen the family; the dart which had transfixed her heart. And my Lord Clare was no little amazed to perceive, or to seem to perceive, that my lady took her anguish calmly. Either she was a Stoic, or more unfeeling as to her offspring than he liked to consider a lady to be who was also his old friend.

Thus did events unroll themselves, till one fine day a party of yeomanry, more intoxicated even than they usually were, took it into their wise heads to investigate the Little House. Happily the chatelaine was at home to defend her penates, whilst old Jug shrieked maledictions on the party like a frantic Chorus. Madam Gillin stoutly (in both senses of the word) spread her redundant charms across her entrance-stone, daring them one and all to come forward and strike a woman. She threatened them —Catholic though she was—with the vengeance of the Bar. Was she not the chosen ally of my Lords Clonmell and Carleton — those gay and festive judges—who held her company and her wine in such deservedly high esteem? Did not even the

gradually saddening attorney-general—Mr. Arthur Wolfe—count her among his friends? Woe be to the military gentlemen who should outrage her sacred hearth. They might come in and do their worst, for she had naught to hide. What could she have to hide? But she warned them, in very positive language indeed, that they would rue the day they did it. They were abashed, but loath to retire, after drunken blustering, before a mere woman's tongue. Such a woman and such a tongue! Would she give the boys some drink? the captain coaxingly suggested. She pertinently retorted that if they or some of their kidney had not already destroyed the shebeen, which she had set up for the benefit of arid throats, drink might be got in plenty without stealing it from a lone woman. Yet would she even give them drink if they'd promise to be off. Not special drink, such as the judges drank, but some other, by no means despicable.

She showed the officers into the dining-parlour; produced for them a few bottles of undeniable Lafitte, bidding Norah act Hebe (who objected not at all), and ordering Jug to distribute jorums of whisky among the common men upon the lawn. It soon became an orgie. One man said something rude to Jug about her erring Biddy with the carroty poll, which sent the hag into a fury. If Biddy was sliding from the straight path, the sin must lie on her head, not her mother's. They were spalpeens, she yelled, who would rot some time—the sooner the better. When should come Judgment-day they

would not awake, ne'er a recreant sowl of them, having long ago been absorbed by lean pigs that were their betters. One man bade her keep a civil tongue, or it would be the worse for her. A riot ensued, which the mistress of the dwelling hurried forth to quell. Before the officers could interfere, Madam Gillin had received a scratch upon her arm, which she exhibited in the moonlight, swearing she was 'kilt entirely,' with an accompaniment of screams from Norah, who was really terrified. The judges should hear of the outrage—my lords Clonmell and Carleton—she vociferated, and the rapscallions should be drummed out of the regiment for insulting lone women who had friends among the great. The party stole away, ashamed of the din, but Madam Gillin made capital of the incident. Bandaging her arm in bloody linen, she drove into the capital, laid a complaint there, and made believe to see a surgeon. Every day for many days she drove into town and back again, closely draped in shawls, with ensanguined bandages exposed. Long ago she perceived that if Terence was to consent to continued imprisonment, his mind must be set at rest by communication with the Directory. He chafed so in his cage that she dreaded sometimes whether he might not escape in the night while the kindly gaoleress slept. Therefore, knowing what a hue-and-cry there was after him—or rather after the unlucky thousand pounds reward—she became in some sort a conspirator herself, going daily to and fro to see her doctor, who was no other than one of

the new delegates, and who thus was enabled to commune with the lordling in spite of Sirr and his battalion of watchers.

There was a lull of expectation in Dublin. Reports flew over the city—no one could tell how or whence they came—reports which set quiet citizens quivering in their beds. Hints of murder, rapine, kidnapping, explosion. Rumour swept howling over the city. The Castle would be blown into the air; it was known that the train was laid, that the match was ready. The lives of the Viceroy and his ministers were not worth a groat. What wonder if loyal yeoman souls were yet further set aflame? What wonder if the terrified senate acquiesced without murmuring at the line of action which the loyalists pursued. Soon so many prospective victims choked the alleys of the Riding-school that extra triangles had to be set up elsewhere. The Royal Exchange itself echoed with the thud of the cat; the screams of the victims for mercy could be heard in the vice-regal apartments hard by. Happily for Lady Camden's peace of mind, she had fled long since. Soldiers were sent out at free quarters to the right and left, with hints that it would be well that their hosts should not forget their coming. Virgins were tossed naked in blankets, while their fathers and brothers were compelled to watch their shame. The pitch-cap was in daily use; gunpowder was exploded in the hair. A new and splendid jest was invented by a merry dog. Why not *picket* the recalcitrant scum? What better joke than to poise

an insolent fellow barefoot upon a pointed stake? His movements would be mirth-inspiring—so grotesque and comical! The only drawback was (as experiment showed) that he fainted all too soon. No; decidedly there was nothing better than the old-fashioned lash. Men swooned under it no doubt; some died; some went raving mad. But even when these misfortunes chanced there was diversion to be had from the expectant moans of those who were awaiting a like fate. Some even lost consciousness before they were tied up at all. Such a lack of humorous perception was disgusting. Why, a rat in a pit gives sport, though his fate is predetermined. A man, though low-born, should shame to be less plucky than a rat! It was rather amusing, and salutary to a certain point in its results, to shoot down children—babes and sucklings—before their mothers' eyes. Yet no! there was so little variety in the behaviour of the mothers. They all rocked themselves and stretched their palms to heaven. It was monotonous and dull. Even the imagination of the squireens, spurred as it was by enterprising colonels, began to flag. Perhaps, after all, they were not so very much more witty or more inventive than the French in the Reign of Terror. Their superiors grew ashamed of them, forgetting that in our imperfect state there is a limit to the human intellect. They grew ashamed of their own dearth of ingenuity, being by this time so swinish and sodden with alcohol and blood-quaffing, that the English and Scotch regiments turned their backs on them, de-

clining to associate with their Irish comrades at all, even under stress of orders and of whisky.

Winter had come again; not white this time, but red—a dusky red, by reason of the shadow of that thunderous cloud which, bloated now, was on the eve of bursting. If there is a limit set to the torturing ingenuity of fiends, so is there—by Divine ordinance—to the endurance even of slaves. A roar swept across the land—a roar of expostulation with the Most High in that He had slept too long. Sure man was not created only for the sake of torment. Children were not born merely to be ripped asunder—virgins to be ravished—men to be done to death by inches? Why, whilst the sun smiled on earth for good and bad alike—its glory heightened by a casual vapour-fleck—was Ireland alone exempted from the boon of light? The last trump had not yet sounded. Why was Erin alone to be a hell? Messengers moved like ants on the earth's surface. Something was preparing. After many delays and feints the real crisis was at hand at last. The cloud, three years ago no bigger than a hand, blackened the horizon. Even the chancellor's stony face grew wan—his nature of adamant faltered—when he surveyed the darkened heavens, hushed in an awful stillness, and waited for what might come. For a moment he trembled like Frankenstein before the monster he had fashioned.

CHAPTER XII.

DANGER.

THROUGH Madam Gillin Terence heard of these things, and was fretted beyond measure in his seclusion. The plot was ripe. Vague tales of succour were wafted from France, but the conspirators knew better now than to lean on broken reeds. They were resolved to make a frantic effort on their own account, independent of extraneous aid. Men can die but once. Death by rope or musket-ball would be preferable to such life as this—life with a brutal soldiery at free quarters in the houses; with triangles in every barrack-yard, each bearing its quivering burthen. Details had been laboriously gone into by Terence and the Wexford chiefs. The project was complete in all its details. The counties were to rise simultaneously at a given signal. The Viceroy and the members of his privy council were each to be captured in his bed. A detachment was

to seize the artillery at Chapelizod; a second was to storm Kilmainham and set free the patriot leaders. It was the old plan which had always proved abortive; could it be brought to fruition now? Horses would be in waiting, so that each leader could escape and scamper off to assume the post allotted to him. The men were enthusiastic, the Wexford chiefs declared, and built great hopes on the fact of having a noble in their ranks. The only objection which Terence's anxious eye could detect was that the lower order among the priests were assuming an authority to which they were not entitled; one which, by reason of their want of education, might prove mischievous. Tone, in all his letters, had always laid stress upon this point.

'Keep the priests out of it,' he had constantly written to Miss Wolfe (Terence remembered it now). 'They will mean well, but are outrageously illiterate and given to fable, which might have a pernicious effect, their influence being enormous.'

A certain Father Roche and a Father Murphy were never weary of writing letters, suggesting changes, offering wild advice. It would be well for the Church militant to be nipped in the bud. The leaders now in Kilmainham should be warned to see to this. Councillor Crosbie would have liked more muskets and a supply of gunpowder. What a pity it was that the French attempts had failed! After all, it was perhaps better as it was. The pike was the weapon for Pat; and though many had been captured, the land was bristling with them.

Cars, too, would be useful for barricades. The small farmers must be told to keep their market-cars in constant readiness. Terence's eye scanned the details. They were not to be improved. All was ready.

Nothing remained but to fix a day. New Year's Eve was suggested, in order that the year 1798 might be well begun. It was amazing and disheartening to find how impossible it was for Pat to keep a secret. A week before the old year expired, proclamations appeared on all the walls, which showed that Government was aware of what was doing. Each householder was commanded, under pain of flogging, to chalk a list on the outer door of the persons who dwelt upon his premises; with the exception (so ran the quaint document) of those who might be suffering from pecuniary embarrassment, whose names were to be transmitted privately to the Lord Mayor. He was likewise bidden to see that no one under his roof went forth into the street between nine at night and five in the morning. Could the conspirators doubt that somehow their every movement was reported?

Madam Gillin, who, strive to control herself as she would, was feverishly excited about the future, discussed the plot in all its bearings with her guest when shutters were shut and curtains drawn. It was a marvel, she declared, that his retreat had remained so long undiscovered. It was a narrow escape though, when the yeomanry arrived; but that was evidently due to accident. There was no

cause to suspect treachery there. It spoke well for the country chiefs—at least the few who had been let into the secret; for a thousand pounds is a tidy nest-egg—a by no means despicable windfall. She liked those leaders whom she had seen when pretending to visit her doctor in Dublin. The best of them was a certain Mr. Bagenal Harvey—a nice gintleman—one of the few who has much personal property at stake. 'He's prudent too, for an Irishman. And so are you, my child!' she remarked, laying a plump hand affectionately on his arm. 'You've never even told your mother where you're hid. I verily believe she hates me so that, if she knew, she'd write and tell the chancellor!'

'I fear she doesn't care,' returned Terence, sadly. 'Nor does Doreen.'

The strange look of compassion flitted across the face of his hostess which he had observed there before. She muttered something which he did not catch, but he knew by the tone that it was uncomplimentary to her ladyship.

'You mustn't think ill of my lady,' he said, with an attempt at cheerfulness. 'Indeed, she so dotes on Shane that there's no room in her heart for poor me! He quite filled up that shrine before ever I came into the world. If I thought she would have been anxious, I would have informed her. But nobody cared, so I told nobody—except one.'

'You told some one! Who was that?'

'A trusty old friend of long standing—true as

gold, if a little stupid—Tim Cassidy. By-the-bye, he said you didn't like him. He's good, but not clever; though I've been a little shaken of late as to the weakness of his intellect. It's wonderful how circumstances bring people out!'

Madam Gillin sat bolt upright, her fat hands clasped round her fat knees.

'You told *him!*' she cried aghast.

'Yes. Do not fear. He's playing a useful game, if a shady one. Each of us must do what he can, you know.'

Mrs. Gillin was so taken aback that, to conceal her emotion, she retired abruptly from the garret, and stared out of the landing-window to consider this intelligence.

'A useful game for *himself*,' she murmured. '*He* knows—he who has wrecked them all—and has left this one here so long with a thousand pounds upon his head! What can he mean? Can he in this be sincere? No. The days of miracles are past.'

Madam Gillin had seen our friend Cassidy once without his jovial mask. It is astonishing how deceived we are in people! We may live with them on familiar terms for years, and discover at last by a gleam that their real selves are quite other from what we thought. Sometimes the gleam never comes at all. How many sons are there who never knew their mothers? How many mothers who have never known their sons—the real person with the veil withdrawn? Madam Gillin had

seen Cassidy once when he was himself, and felt satisfied that he could never be true except to his own interests. Then this new position which looked the darker for the light she could throw on it, twisted itself in her mind, displaying all its facets. *He* knew that the young man, on whom so much depended, had been lying for weeks and weeks in ambush at the Little House. Why did he leave him there? Was he waiting for the reward to be doubled? When the moment arrived for her *protégé* to be taken—when he chose to speak, what would become of HER? He would surely ruin her. Could the judges save her from the penalties which would accrue from taking a Protestant under age to mass, as well as harbouring an arch-rebel?

'Well, I can't help it,' she said aloud, mentally tossing up the sponge. 'I've done what I thought right. It's difficult to see the way. He must be got out of this while there's time, and New Year's Eve so near, too! Oh that I had learnt this before!' Painful misgivings possessed her mind. 'Pray God and the Holy Mother that the poor boy may be spared!' she whispered. 'Knowing what I do, it's bitterly sorry I am for him. That proud mother of his will burn for what she's doing some time or other, though she's happy now.'

Mrs. Gillin, argus-eyed as she thought herself, could not know that the chatelaine of Strogue had already passed through a part of the travail of her punishment. She had to judge by the face, which

was a mask—the face which was stony and cold enough—as cold as a face of marble.

Suddenly (as she meditated) the buxom lady saw something which caused her to crouch down and draw hastily back from the window.

'It's come!' she murmured; 'I felt it *here* in my heart. What a mercy that he told me, or it would have come on us unawares! Norah!' she called with caution down the stairs, 'send Phil up here this minute.' Then she sped to the garret. 'My lad,' she said quickly, 'hurry now! Get through the trap on to the roof. Phil must do the same. I'll tidy the place in a jiffy! Ye can both lie cosy in the valley of the roof.'

'What's the matter?' asked Terence, without moving.

'Matter enough. There's a party coming down the road. I'll stake my head it's Sirr or some of them. They're coming to look for you!'

'Then give them some of your Lafitte, my second mother!' laughed Terence, carelessly, 'and pack them about their business.'

'No,' Mrs. Gillin said, 'I can't explain now. They must go over the house, and be convinced that ye're not in it; and to-night we'll pack ye somewhere else for safety.'

There was no withstanding her energy. The two young men obeyed their peremptory hostess, marvelling much at her. It was Sirr, sure enough. His peculiar stoop could be recognised a mile off. Behind him were a dozen redcoats.

Mrs. Gillin was snipping dead twigs with a large pair of scissors; she wore a loose green kerchief over her turban, so unbecomingly arranged that it was evident she expected no visitors. Norah was dutifully holding a basket. How idle of the gardener to have neglected to trim those hedges! Old Jug sat crooning in the wintry sun, her eyes twinkling like beads from under a tangle of sandy elf-locks and flopping cap, her favourite dudheen between her lips.

'Misthress dear!' she croaked between two puffs of smoke, 'it's the meejor.'

But that lady was too much absorbed in gardening to hear.

'Good-day, madam,' quoth Sirr, wrinkling down his brow-tufts with a smirk, and saluting in military fashion.

'Bless the pigs, meejor! is it you?' she cried, throwing down her scissors. 'Ye've called to ask after my arm? It's mighty kind! The ruffin gave my poor hand a terrible wrench, and sprains are slow to cure. The bleeding's stopped this long while, but the docthor's eating the sowl out of me. I go to be bandaged three times a week. It's not your boys, meejor, that would outrage a leedy so!'

Major Sirr was disconcerted, and began to stammer:

'Glad ye're better, madam—hugely glad! I would not for the world do anything disagreeable to a lady—but business is business, isn't it?'

'What's up?' cried the amazed little woman.

'I'm here, I regret to say, on painful business. May we come inside? Thank you!'

'The meejor's always welcome,' affably returned the other, with one of those superb but ceremonious curtseys wherewith she was wont to electrify the Viceroy. Then, plucking off the kerchief, she whispered audibly to Norah, 'Begorrer, it's rooned we are! To be seen with a square of green silk round mee ould noddle! But the meejor won't tell.'

Major Sirr observed with sorrow that the lady was not so cordial as usual. There was an air of suspicious virtue with the ears set back which distressed him, for he was really partial to her, though he loved her claret better.

''Tis with deepest pain——' he was beginning, when she cut him short.

'Give tongue!' she said curtly. 'What ails you?'

This was a slap in the face. He was accustomed to be fondled and caressed by those whom it was his painful duty to flay alive. She could not be so hoighty-toighty if afraid.

'You are right,' he returned; 'business is business. I regret to say I must search your house, for I've reason to know that Councillor Crosbie is concealed here. I advise you to produce him, and have done with it.'

Oh, Major Sirr! Major Sirr! You should have sent your better-half to cope with Mrs. Gillin. What are a dozen men against one woman, in a battle of wits? What are two dozen men against

one woman whose blood is roused, who stands like a tigress 'twixt her whelp and danger?

Major Sirr expected her to change colour, to betray at least a quiver of the lip, a tremor of the fingers; then, recovering herself, to deny largely and pour forth claret with effusion. Such signs would have been the sure tokens of guilt, and he would have known how to act accordingly.

Instead of this she stabbed him, rather too hard for playfulness, with her scissors, and skipped away laughing with elephantine grace. Then wagging her turban at him (which was wofully awry), she set her hands akimbo on her high waistband, thereby sending her elbows almost to the level of her ears, and remarked with unusual bluntness:

'Pah! ye stink of the Staghouse! Stale blood and brains! Go on, hangman; do your worst. Mr. Crosbie *was* here—has been here for weeks. I won't deny, since ye know all about it. If ye hadn't been a dolt, ye'd have found him long ago. Why, he walked out with Norah each evening on the shore. He was here when the yeoman blackguards wounded and hurt my arm. Do ye think, if it was otherwise, I'd have stooped to give them drink? Not likely! Mr. Crosbie *was* here, but the bird's flown. You may well look glum. Sorra a drop of the crathur your men'll get out of me this day. Go, search the house; turn it inside out. He lived in the right-hand garret. Ye'll find some of his things about, though he's in Wexford by this

time. Here are all my keys (except the cellar key). Search!'

This was disheartening. Behaviour coarse and rude. But duty is duty. Sirr stooped to pick up the keys, which had been tossed to his feet, and, wrapping himself in a rag of dignity, proceeded to examine the premises. It was as she said. There was no one there, though there were signs of recent occupation. Ruefully the major looked into the dining-parlour. There were no nice things laid out for his behoof.

'I've only done my duty,' he urged, as he clutched the virtuous lady's fat hand. 'Don't be cross with me. I'm glad my mission's failed, though I should have won a thousand by it—there!'

But she shook him off and swept away, murmuring over her shoulder, with sniffing nostrils, that she had done with him; would never meet him as a friend again (though her house was open to examination whensoever he was anxious for an outrage); that she would take it as a personal favour if he would save her the pain of cutting him dead in public; for under no conditions whatsoever would she consent to condone this insult.

Sirr was sorry, but shrugged his shoulders. He ordered his men to march on to Strogue. Perhaps the culprit was not gone to Wexford, but was lying perdu in the vaults of the ancient Abbey. Mrs. Gillin screamed to old Jug, from an upper window, to run round to Larry in the farm-buildings, and bid him bring out the carriage. She must go to

Dublin to the doctor. Her nerves were *rooned* now, as well as her spirits and poor arm.

Then, closing the window, she called on the fugitives to come forth.

'There's no time to be lost,' she said. 'Sirr suspects nothing, but the other will. The serpent! He is capable of coming down himself, in a friendly way, to spend the evening; and that's more than I could endure, even for you.'

'Of whom do you speak?' asked Terence, bewildered.

'Don't chatter!' interrupted the kind lady. '*'Twill* be twilight in an hour or so. You must get out of this before Sirr gets back, and reports to the other what he's done. Then the brute may come, and welcome. It'll be a pleasure to laugh at him. Sirr'll be an hour or so rummaging through the Abbey. Meanwhile you'll take my place in the coach. You're just my size and figure. Your arm looks awful bad. You want a doctor sadly. But that gossoon there; he can't go too, as I've always gone alone. Unlucky! He can't stay, either; that's certain. What'll we do at all?' She tore off the soiled turban to rub her head, for the better coaxing of her ingenuity. Presently she clapped her hands. 'That's it. Ye'll go separate to the same rendezvous. You, Phil, shall go first, for ye must walk. It's like a masquerade in the good old times; yet my heart is dreadful sore—ochone!'

Rapidly Madam Gillin produced some sailor-slops which her own boatman used to wear when she took

her pleasure on the bay. 'Phil will wear these and start at once,' she explained. 'His face must not be seen; it's too well known. In the boathouse yonder he'll find a coil of rope. He must bear it on his shoulders as a motive, and let a loop or two fall over his forehead. Be off now, and be careful. Take a knife, in case of accidents. Ye must be clear off before Sirr returns from the Abbey. If by ill-luck ye were to come face to face, stab at his legs. He wears a coat of mail. *I felt it with my scissors.* Away!'

Phil departed, quite glad of the excitement, delighted to break through his long and weariful incarceration.

Terence was packed in the celebrated wrapper, which once to see was never to forget. A beaver bonnet and veil covered his head. An arm wa deftly bandaged. He stepped into the coach, drew up the glasses, and leaning back in the shadow as the coachman whipped his horses, began to collect his thoughts. Whew! What a whirl it was! Why dear Madam Gillin should suddenly become nervous, and wag her plumes so, he could not imagine. Unpleasant things are ofttimes for the best. Concealed in the capital itself he would be all the better able to superintend in person the proceedings of New Year's Eve. Yes! It was quite fortunate that she should thus have sent him off. He would see some of the delegates that very evening; concert passwords and signals. Five minutes' talk is worth a dozen letters. He would send round

for Cassidy, who, faithful to his *rôle*, should be able to unravel for them the ins and outs of the Castle tactics, some of which seemed hazy. He would—— What was that? Sirr and his men! Then they had not lingered at the Abbey, but had started Dublinwards before him? No matter. All was right. The major had peered into the carriage, and, perceiving the wounded arm and well-known wrapper, had turned away his head abruptly. How cleverly Mrs. Gillin had managed the whole thing! Why had she taken such a fancy to him? If he were her own son, she could not be more loving and considerate.—What was that? A man bending under a load. Phil, of course. How slow he walked! Sirr's men seemed stepping out. Please Heaven they would not overtake him. No. And if they did, what then? A boor with a burthen of rope. A guilty conscience; how it racks and torments us about nothing!

Hark! a sound—audible through the rumbling coach-wheels. A shout—a cry! Unable to resist the impulse, Terence lowered a glass and protruded his head, with the beaver bonnet and veil. Great heavens! The soldiers had gained on Phil, whose burthen impeded movement; had, from sheer brutality, torn it from him and disclosed his features. He had been recognised! Sirr saw through the trick, and shook his fist with balked fury. He was gesticulating in the road. Some soldiers were hailing the coach from afar, but Larry whipped his horses with a will. Some more, jumping a ditch,

had broken through a hedge and vanished. Poor Phil! he would be murdered. Was it not base to leave him thus unaided? Yet—the CAUSE. Terence felt that his life was not his own. Eagerly he looked backwards as the road took a loop-turn. He must see the last of poor Phil—probably the very last of his faithful henchman. Phil had ceased struggling. Terence drew in his head, and, man though he was, burst into a flood of tears. Poor, faithful Phil! What a sad end!

Half-way betwixt Strogue and Dublin the road leaves the shore, and winds inland with an intricate series of doubles—arranged so for the benefit of certain small villa-holders, round whose tiny properties the way meanders. Terence forgot this fact, so absorbed was he in the fate of his attached servant, otherwise he would have seen his danger, and, throwing off his disguise, would have trusted to a hare's tactics in the open. But, clad in woman's attire, he was weeping like a woman, and bemoaning his fate, when the carriage came to a standstill with a shock. A detachment of soldiers, taking a short cut, had come upon the carriage, and, springing on the bits, had thrust back the horses on their haunches.

Deception was futile now. Dragging off the ignoble bonnet and wrapper, Terence sprang lightly out, and drawing a pistol, prepared to barter his life against as many of the foe as possible.

One man shot poor Larry on his box, lest he should take part in the scuffle; another hamstrung the

off-horse, which whinnied, and leaped up with pain. The shot was answered by a hulloo and rush of feet. Through the hedge-gap appeared Sirr, breathless but foaming, urging on his men, two of whom dragged Phil, an inert mass, between them.

'Murther!' groaned Phil. 'That the masther should be tuk, and throngh me!'

'Yes,' jeered Sirr; 'we have him now. Having detected you, I knew at once that he could not be far off!'

Terence discharged his pistols with good effect. A man fell to each of them. Then, drawing a dagger, he leaned his back against a tree.

Sirr, as his way was on these occasions, withdrew to the rear, content with egging on his hounds from a safe distance. The men waited for a second, watching the eye of the man who stood at bay. Phil saw his opportunity, and took it. With a jerk he freed himself, stabbed one fellow, and, lunging at another, slipped, and tumbled on the moist earth. But he was not to be thus foiled. Wriggling along the ground, he reached Major Sirr, and slashed him across both legs, who, springing into the air with a howl, tossed away the sword-cane that he had unsheathed and fell disabled. Phil caught it, and stabbed the shrieking major again and again till it broke. 'Right she was!' he said; 'the dastard does wear mail!'

The diversion seemed likely to save Terence, who, turning, sped swiftly along the furrows, favoured by sinking twilight.

'Run, masther, run!' Phil screamed. 'Please the Lord, he'll be safe yet.'

'Dead or alive!' howled Sirr, who clawed the ground with his fingers in his pain.

A man levelled his musket and fired. Terence turned like a top, dropped on his knees, then struggling up, moved on as swiftly as before. Another fired, but missed. The fugitive flew on, but not so fast. A mere youth outstripped him, and stooping down in front, tripped him by the feet. Both fell heavily. The bigger of the two being uppermost—his right arm swinging loose—made a desperate effort to throttle the boy with his left hand. It took several men, pressing his chest with heavy muskets, to tear his prey from him, and bind him in such a way as to prevent further resistance.

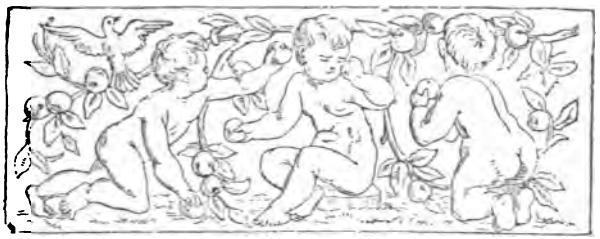
Terence and Phil were taken to the provost, whilst Sirr (vowing vengeance especially against the latter) was borne away to have the wounds dressed which disfigured his comely calves.

Madam Gillin sat at home in a perspiration, waiting for news. No news! That looked well. It was dawn before she sought her couch, determined to try and sleep. A hubbub aroused the three occupants of the Little House. What was it? eight o'clock! An enormous detachment of soldiers' wives, with kettles, equipage, and baggage, demanding hospitality, producing an official order to that effect. Free quarters; and for women, too—tho dirty, drunken drabs! Madam Gillin clasped her

fat hands in anguish. Then the stratagem must have been discovered. One had been taken—which? or both? Oh, Heaven! Would no one tell her?

A blowsy wife, more compassionate than the rest, said that all the world knew by this time that the meejor had won the big reward.

Madam Gillin tightened her lips, and said no more, while Jug whistled lamentations through her gums. 'It's the curse of Crummell on the farriers—breed, seed, and branch. If he'd gone alone he'd have been safe.' Which, in all probability, was true enough, though not because Phil chose to wield a firing-iron. But Madam Gillin would not listen to her nurse. Poor lad! To be taken without striking a blow—without even the threadbare satisfaction which belongs to a leader of forlorn hopes—of laying down life, perhaps, but at a heavy price. What an unjust world it is! Mrs. Gillin felt it more and more.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE HURRY.

MR. PITT'S scheme was doing well. Protestants and Catholics, the upper and the lower class, having been successfully set at each other's throats—the leading spirits of the popular party being snugly caged—the executive thought the moment come to harvest their Dead-sea apples. The capture of Terence was accomplished at a fortunate moment; for things had gone too far now for the project of resistance to be tamely abandoned. The proposed rising was perforce postponed that the harried Directory might for a fourth time reorganise itself. Ill-luck haunted that Directory. Tone, inaugurator of the society, was a broken-spirited exile; Emmett, Neilson, Russell, Bond, zealous disciples of their prophet, languishe din Kilmainham; the Honourable Terence Crosbie (most promising blossom on the stem) lay wounded—delirious from fever—within

the provost. None of the projectors of rebellion were permitted to take part in it; yet it was evident that the days of meek endurance were at an end. The places of the absent were supplied by men, ambitious but incapable: small country gentlemen of limited attainment, or farmers of little culture, who were speedily swallowed by the flood, to be supplanted in turn by furious fanatics, as ignorant but more unscrupulous than they.

Nothing was attempted on New Year's Eve. January and February passed; March and April came, and were gone. Lord Clare wondered whether he had been too precipitate, and digested Sully's saying: 'Pour la populace ce n'est jamais par envie d'attaquer qu'elle se soulève, mais par impatience de souffrir.' Had the people not suffered enough yet? The yeomanry motto had been, 'Soyons frères, ou je t'assomme!' and nobly they had acted on it. The people glared and showed their fangs, ready and willing for the fray; but they were leaderless. Those who in the emergency affected to command, racked by indecision, put off the important moment. Rebel and royalist frowned silently one at the other, lance in rest, both itching to go to work, both declining the odium of the first move. It was the last brief lull of stillness before the bursting of the storm—of the storm which had been so long in bursting. Dublin was uncertain how to proceed. If the Croppies would rise and gain one decisive victory, then Dublin, joining them openly, would turn and tear its rulers. On the

other hand, should the Croppies encounter tribulation the capital would grovel at the mumbling Viceroy's feet, presenting both cheeks to the smiter with expressions of Christian meekness.

It was an anxious time for the lord-lieutenant and his Privy Council.

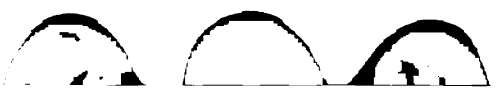
To the chancellor's disgust General Abercromby (who supplanted Carhampton), on whom he had counted for friendly co-operation as commander of the forces, chose this awkward period of uncertainty to retire.

'Nothing,' he bluffly said, 'could justify the behaviour of Government. If the two Houses of Parliament chose to turn their motherland into a slaughter-house, dire retribution would be sure to fall upon them some day. At all events he, a stranger, would have nothing to do with political crimes.' And so he went away; and the supreme command was accepted *pro tem.* by General Lake, till such time as a fit substitute could be selected.

The attitude of pugnacious Pat, eager for the fight, but lance in rest, could not be permitted to endure. That those who were wont to tread on the tails of each other's coats at Donnybrook should in incongruous fashion assume patience like that of St. Simon Stylites was merely an insult to their masters. A little more humour must be displayed by the friends of England—a few more jokes, quite broad ones now. A dozen or so of judicious murders, a grand confiscation of poor men's cattle, a few more virgins ravished—a real sharp touch of

the spur, in fact. The jokers acted with a will, and the desired effect was gained. Kildare rose on the 23rd of May. Simultaneous attacks of a timorous kind were made on various strongholds, of which one only could be pronounced successful. The barrack of Prosperous was surprised in the night, the commandant killed, and a few officers sacrificed, the place committed to the flames. This was encouraging, and Government could well afford the loss of a few lives. But the rebels needed a deal of spurring; they were still too craven for an important venture; their hands were unnerved; their blood was chilled by fear of treachery. Oh! degenerate scions of turbulent Keltic kings!

The boys of Kildare, who were the first, casting distrust aside, to take the field, had been ground too low to allow the lamp of patriotism to burn steadily. After an abortive effort of a few days they sued for mercy. Slaves of the soil, hewers of wood and drawers of water, they were doomed to be; their leaders saw it now, and roundly told them so, and they retorted on their leaders. Both indeed were sadly below the mark. If those who endeavoured to command were unable to manage their rabble, the latter were no better than the most innocent of savages. In presence of the foe they forgot the little drilling they had learned, danced forward like children, with hats on pikes and wild gestures of defiance, and tumbled pellmell over each other, hit or alarmed at the first blare of musketry. The business of the disciplined cohorts was simply to



stand quiet until the gibbering simpletons advanced to an easy distance; then to cut them down as the sickle mows the corn, in serried heaps upon the furrows. The boys of Kildare sued for mercy, and were graciously informed that if they would come to the Gibbet-Rath on the Curragh, within given hours on a certain day, and there deliver up all weapons of offence, they might be permitted to return to bondage and be happy. They came, having been assured that General Dundas had received permission from the Castle to show clemency. Thirteen cartloads of pikes were delivered on the plain. General Duff, who, assisted by the colonel of the Foxhunters, was acting for Dundas, bade the rebels make of these a heap, and confessing on their knees their insolence and wickedness, beg the King's pardon humbly. The craven wretches obeyed, for no vestige of courage was left in them. Bereft even of the courage to die, they kneeled, praying that the agony of death might be past. They kneeled, with misery too intense for speech, on the great plain, with heads bowed and hands clutched together—a spectacle of human abjectness harrowing enough to have made the angels weep.

'Charge!' shouted General Duff, 'and spare no rebel!'

The obedient Foxhunters (so called from the brushes they wore in their helmets) hacked down with their sabres the defenceless peasants to the number of three hundred and more. There were eighty-five widows in one single street of Kildare

that afternoon. It is but fair to say that no part of the infamy of this splendid joke attaches to General Dundas, for the massacre was shown to have taken place without his knowledge or consent. Duff and the colonel of the Foxhunters must bear the brunt of it alone, along with other jests of equal brilliancy. A few of the victims managed to scuttle off, hiding in furze-bushes or behind walls, and reached Kildare at nightfall, to tell the tale of butchery. A woman who lay ill ten miles off, woke (so it is said) from a vision of her husband weltering in gore, and nothing would appease her but that her daughter and aged father should go forth to seek him. They were met by knots of country-folk flying along the road in wildest excitement.

'Bad news, old man!' they wailed as they pursued their course like a whirl of wraiths. 'Our friends lie kilt—God rest their sowls—*all*—on the Curragh, this day!'

Old man and grandchild harnessed a horse and car, determined to learn more. The gloaming rested on the plain when they reached the Gibbet-Rath.

Two hundred bodies were turned over before they came upon the one they sought. Its hands moved, in an effort to stanch a wound with a remnant of an old cravat, and in the increasing darkness they chanced to observe the flutter. But for that movement, where so many around were still, they might have passed by their bread-winner. Filled with thankfulness in that he yet lived, they

stretched him on the car, for prudence' sake in corpse-like attitude, shaded his eyes with a hat, sprinkled some soiled hay over his prostrate form, and hurried home in haste. But a rumour somehow got wind that 'the Croppies were getting alive again,' and so the military were sent round to scour the adjacent country to make certain that no such untoward circumstance occurred.

Two men belonging to the Ancient Britons approached the hut at midnight where this man lay, snatched by a marvel from the jaws of Death.

'What!' one said, 'that Croppy living still?'

'Yes, your honour,' replied the sick wife, with meekness. 'The Lord has been pleased to grant the boy a longer day.'

'Come, come!' was the jocose retort. 'He'll be best out of misery, for he can't possibly recover. Leastways, his curing will be tedious to an ailing wife like you.' And the wretch pistolled him in cold blood then and there, while the frenzied widow shrieked for mercy, and the daughter strove to shield him with her own body in the ecstasy of her despair.

This carnival on the Gibbet-Rath finally snuffed out Kildare; but Wexford, which was made of different materials, rose up to take her place. The men of Wexford belonged to another caste, had different hair and features, were of a fiercer nature than the Kelts. They rose with one accord, their blood stirred to fever-frenzy by the intelligence which drifted down to them. Kildare had disgraced

the emerald flag; it should be the privilege of Wexford to retrieve its tarnished honour. They would set an example to pusillanimous counties that still hesitated about rising. War to the knife! no quarter given! Such should be their watch-word. Proudly let the green banner wave. Victory or Death!

These raw but doughty warriors meant business. They set about establishing themselves, therefore, in true military array; and in the first instance collected their strength into two detachments, the first of which, mustering three thousand men, encamped on Killthomas Hill, where three hundred of the yeomanry gave them battle and obtained a bloodless victory. Not quite bloodless though, for one Lieutenant Bookey lost his life, and his indignant comrades offered to his manes (after a massacre on Killthomas Hill which was only business) the sacrifice of several Popish chapels and at least a hundred Catholic dwellings on their next day's march. This had the auspicious effect of infuriating to delirium the second and greater camp, whose leading spirits saw that, for them and theirs, their motto was but too prophetic a one. Unless they were prepared to see their faith stamped out, there was clearly nothing for the men of Wexford but Death or Victory.

Like desperate men as they were, they set about accomplishing the latter straightway. On the rising ground of Oulart, distant eight miles from Wexford town, they rallied round the green at

least four thousand strong. With proud defiance and undaunted mien they beheld the enemy's approach—red coats dimmed by dust and mist, and bayonets glimmering. They awaited the onset with stern determination, and—fled helter-skelter on the first attack. The yeomanry pursued with shouts and jeers, following fast over rock and boulder, sweeping the rebels before them as a broom sweeps chaff. But, arrived at the summit of the hill, a hint came to the insurgents that cavalry lay in ambush on the other side to intercept their flight. Cavalry! To their untutored minds a charge of horsemen meant instant annihilation, whilst they were quite resolved to live—for Victory. They rallied, turned on the disordered and breathless pursuers, and charging downward with their pikes, bore all before them. Taken by surprise, out of breath, disorganised, none of the quondam pursuers survived to tell of their defeat, save the lieutenant-colonel, a sergeant, and three privates. Many of the rebels succumbed, but what mattered that? Those who remained alive were masters of the situation. Theirs was the prestige of having beaten the royalist soldiers in the open field. Numbers had vanquished discipline; ignorance had made science of none effect; the spirits of the enemy were lowered in proportion to their own triumph. Hosts of peasants, lukewarm hitherto through fear, flocked to join the victors. Mustering now quite four thousand strong, and burning to add new leaves of laurel to their chaplet, they marched with childish

gesture, intoning as they marched the 'Marseillaise,' to storm the town of Enniscorthy.

Those who led them saw that if the God of battles would continue to favour them, their condition might be greatly improved, even to the point of rendering their unwieldy host truly formidable. The capture of Enniscorthy would aid the insurgents much, for that place (twelve miles or so from Wexford) is bisected by the Slaney, whose ebb and flow permits vessels of light tonnage to approach the bridge which unites the two portions of the town. Hence it was certain to be well stocked with useful things, lying there for transmission up the country. It might contain ammunition too—a precious find indeed—for the Wexford men were good shots with a gun, accustomed to earn a modest wage by shooting waterfowl for the markets of Dublin and of Cork, in consequence of which they had obtained exemption from the more vexatious clauses of the Gunpowder Act. If Enniscorthy should fall into their hands they would find themselves provided, too, with a splendid camping-ground called Vinegar Hill, which rose adjacent to the city. At their leisure they might take ship, and, sailing down the Slaney, seize the town of Wexford—a seaport with a magnificent harbour. What a pity the French had been so unfortunate! How gladly they would have welcomed the tricolour as it glided through the narrow entrance which admits into that glorious anchorage!

Certain intelligence arrived at Enniscorthy that

it would be attacked on the 28th at midday. The drums beat to arms; the garrison took their posts. The North Cork Militia occupied the bridge; cavalry were posted in the leading street; a detachment of yeomanry occupied an elevation three or four hundred yards in front of the chief gate. On perceiving the latter, the insurgent column halted and deployed, extending largely to the right and left, to outflank the small band before them, and cut it off from the town. Then they moved forward, driving cattle in advance of them, opening at the same time a well-directed fire. The yeomanry, perceiving their tactics, retired within the walls, covered by a charge of cavalry which, whilst dispersing a band that was pressing them too closely, came itself to tribulation by reason of the cattle. A second body, with a second lot of kine, made for a gate to westward, which was protected by a tributary stream. The ford had previously been deepened, and was considered dangerous enough to act as its own defence. A gigantic priest, who wore a broad crossbelt and a dragoon's sabre swinging, was equal to the occasion:

'Drive in the cattle, boys, and swarm over their backs!'

No sooner said than done. Goaded by pikes the animals rushed headlong into the gulf, and the rebels, crossing the palpitating bridge, crept unperceived into the town, which was by this time a mass of flame. The disaffected inhabitants picked off the soldiery from their windows; fired their own

houses to burn them out when the royalists sought protection there; dragged away frieze-coated bodies, that the carnage might not discourage the survivors; while women and young girls, in the heroism born of excitement, ran hither and thither among the bullets, administering new courage in the welcome shape of whisky. The streets were so involved in smoke that the yeomen could not perceive the rebels till they felt their pikes within their flesh. The whirling flame flared in such a sheet as to unite in a seething arch over their heads—singeing the bearskin of their caps, scorching their very hair and eyelashes. After a conflict wherein for three hours each inch was savagely disputed, the loyalists found themselves pushed backwards into the central square. 'Victory!' hallooed the insurgents—just a little bit too soon. A heavy discharge from the market-house made them waver. Profiting by their recoil, cavalry and infantry rallied. Their discipline stood them in good stead at the turning of the tide. They dashed forward; drove the huge wave in a vast roll before them, which ebbed across the bridge, down the straight street, away out of the town—a turbulent maelstrom of discomfited fugitives. Though the rebels were for the time repulsed, it was certain that they would return again on the morrow and sweep the place clean by sheer weight of numbers. The little garrison was weakened by half its strength. The loyalists, unwitting of the insidious purpose of Lord Clare, loudly blamed the executive for leaving so inadequate a

force to battle with so immense a mob. It was a pernicious want of forethought which would cost many lives. A strong force of regulars, they complained, and this Hurry would be over in two days at most. Guileless loyalists of Enniscorthy! After all the labour of incubation, it was not fitting that the trouble should be too brief. The chancellor's twitter of conscience was past, and his hand was steady on the plough again, to force it through roots and stones. The iron, being drawn, might not be sheathed again before it had cut into the writhing soul of Erin ineffaceably. She must remember the Hurry to the end of her existence, as an awful sample of the terrors which would fall even yet more heavily upon her if she should dare again to rouse the wrath of her elder sister. Consistently, therefore, till the lesson was complete, two hundred regulars or so were always expected to cope with two thousand rebels; and, even with those odds against them, the former, more frequently than not, obtained the upper hand. In the present instance, however, it was not so; for it was clear that the loyalists must desert the town or be killed to a man. In the mid-hour of night, lighted by the afterglow of conflagration, they retreated without warning to Wexford—a melancholy train; bearing their women and their wounded on their horses; leaving infants by the wayside, while the aged sank down from weariness and were abandoned to the tender mercies of the mob.

On the 1st of June the great camping-ground

hard-by Enniscorthy presented a strange picture, occupied as it had then become by an armed host of ten thousand men, independent of a grand array of camp-followers, suttlers, women and children, who flocked in from all quarters to applaud the defenders of their hearths. From a military point of view, Vinegar Hill is strong. High grounds are crowned by a cone of bold ascent, capped by a ruined mill, while the cultivated fields beneath are divided into small enclosures, intersected by stone walls and trenches. For defence by irregular troops who trusted rather to numbers than to skill, such a position was particularly favourable; for the enclosures afforded safe cover for skirmishers, who could watch the approach of an enemy whilst they remained themselves unseen. The appearance of the singular mushroom-bed which speedily sprouted up was extremely picturesque, in keeping with the wildness of guerilla warfare. Tents of the Donnybrook pattern rose on all sides. Vinegar Hill was intended to become a temporary home; for the chiefs were resolved that this should be the centre of their operations until such time as they could be masters of the Castle. Long avenues of bent wattles like straggling caterpillars of every hue crawled up the slope, covered with the spoils of Enniscorthy—patchwork-quilts, sheets, ripped sacks, rugs, blankets. At intervals a smaller edifice, crowned by an old brush and swinging lantern, invited to a temporary shebeen. If an old pot dangled too, it was a sign that food might also be procured there; though, the

weather being warm, the soup-caldrons were usually placed without, that all the ragged host might lick their lips over the good things which tumbled into them for a ragout. Nor were the more æsthetic pleasures of the eye and ear neglected. The organ of Enniscorthy church and its peal of bells were brought thither in state for some one or other to jangle upon night and day; whilst as for flags, the camp was alive with them, of every colour except orange, bearing each a rude harp without a crown. One, conspicuous above the rest, was black, with the cognisance M. W. S. in white; and this the loyalists in their charity chose to unriddle as 'Murder without sin,' whereas its real meaning was 'Marksmen of Wexford and of Shelmalier.' Among the throng might be observed men in the King's uniform—bright spots in the mass of brown. Such soldier prisoners as the crew had taken were treated well and guarded with care, for they were of the greatest value as drill-sergeants, and might be seen day and night plodding up and down with awkward squads, into whom they were striving to instil the first germs of military science. What an unmanageable mob it was! swelling hourly through the constant influx of recruits, not one of whom possessed the faintest idea of discipline; each one of whom had a predilection for poteen and a dim suspicion of the incompetence of his leaders. It was at this juncture that the weak, well-intentioned country gentlemen, who had striven to occupy the empty shoes of their imprisoned betters, were swept

into the shade by the unscrupulous influence of the lower clergy—uncultured, ferocious creatures, whose worst passions were aroused by the burning of their chapels, the desecration of their altars; men who scrupled not to play upon the vulgar superstition of a half-savage multitude for the gaining of a cherished end. They became hideous tyrants—such men as the priests of Tallat and of Boulovogue; merciless as their persecutors had been without mercy. Inflamed by wrong and intoxicated by a little brief authority, they were guilty of enormities which, at a quieter moment, they would themselves have surveyed with horror. The higher Catholic clergy withstood the force of the current, and, resisting temptation, publicly disapproved and deplored their acts; yet who (looking on the picture calmly at this distance of time) will throw the first stone at them? The multitude had, with deliberate art, been stung to madness. The bad passions of their teachers had been stirred in their most vital place. If the the people were as ignorant as their own cattle, who was accountable for it? England, through the cruel enactments of centuries. If the members of the inferior priesthood were debased and wicked, who made them so? England, by persecuting them without ceasing, by forbidding their minds to be illumined by education—England, by her accursed Penal Code.

The original champions being caged, three Catholic priests, Fathers Murphy, Kearnes, and Roche, overturning established authority, assumed

the conduct of affairs, and set about the organising of their army. What had been hitherto a conflict of classes tinged with a religious bias, became now a purely religious crusade, accompanied by all the crimes which, through the history of the world, have been intimately associated with religion. What an inscrutable vision it is—that of the stately Spirit walking through earth's story, her fair features distorted, her white robes edged with blood, her pure skirts soiled by the vilest lees of the human heart—*always!*

The new leaders divided their host into three divisions, with each a special mission. The first, under Father Kearnes, was to possess itself of Newtown Barry. This expedition proved abortive. The second, under Father Roche (which, owing to lack of space on Vinegar Hill, was encamped at Carrickbyrne with an outpost at Scullabogue), was to attack New Ross, then, proceeding northward, was to join the third body in a grand attempt on Dublin. This plan was plausible enough, for Gorey, Arklow, and Wicklow were weakly garrisoned, and, should those citadels give way, the road to the capital lay open—undefended. Perry of Inch and Father Murphy (who commanded the third division) were mighty men of valour. The latter swore by the Holy Mother that he was invulnerable, carrying bullets in his pockets to prove the miracle. Chances seemed fairly in favour of success. The garrison of Gorey, for instance, numbered but a hundred and thirty men. What could they hope to do—dis-

ciplined though they were—against a rabble of six thousand? They did what was wisest under the circumstances; called temerity to their aid, and essayed to brazen out the difficulty of their position. Instead of waiting to be attacked, they rushed out upon the road, raising such clouds of summer dust that the advancing rebels, supposing reinforcements to have arrived, turned and fled in terror. The advanced guard of the insurgents slinking off, had taken the courage from the rest. Each man vied with his neighbour in the race, and the Irish peasant is wondrous fleet of foot.

Father Kearnes' detachment met with more grave misfortune than this merely temporary rout. The simultaneous attempt upon New Ross (nineteen miles from Wexford) was the hardest-fought day of the entire Hurry—one, too, which will be darkened through all time by the memory of a deplorable outrage. The object in gaining possession of New Ross was the same as had induced the taking of Enniscorthy. For as the one stood on the Slaney, with water-access to Wexford Harbour, so did the other command water also, standing as it did upon the Nore and Barrow, within similar distance of the important port of Waterford. New Ross, too, was placed on the very border of Kilkenny. All the disaffected in that county were expected to join the insurgents in a united gigantic effort to win so fine a jewel; for, as soon as it was captured, nothing would have been easier than to drop down to Waterford, which loved not the Castle joss; which

was weakly garrisoned, and tempting to boot in the way of plunder. But this well-balanced scheme was frustrated and made of no effect by the god of war's ill-temper. Sure he's as fickle and as false as Fortune is—that arrant feckless jade! And has not her excuse neither—being a man, who, by reason of his sex, should be above lowering his dignity by feminine whimsies. On this 5th of June he got out of bed on the wrong side (in consequence of being called so early maybe), and the plan against New Ross miscarried. At 3 a.m. Bagenal Harvey, who commanded in conjunction with Father Roche, despatched a flag of truce, imploring the garrison not to provoke rapine by useless resistance. He bade them look up at the heights which commanded the town, and count the myriads whose frieze turned the landscape dun. For the good of all 'twere better to surrender at once, rather than uselessly to sacrifice precious life. A letter worthy of the kindly soft-hearted gentleman who wrote it.

The flag of truce was slain. His name was Furlong, a popular man. The insurgents, watching from above, beheld him lying prone—shot through the heart by an outpost sentinel. With fury they upbraided Harvey as an old dame for his ill-timed courtesy, vowing that they would obey no one but the priest that day. Maddened by the sight of that single corpse lying far below upon its face, they poured with the overwhelming impulse of a destroying flood unexpectedly set free down the steep declivity —an avenging awful host, numbering twenty thou-

sand—and battered in the Three-bullet Gate. If the huge force could have been divided by scientific skill, an attack might have been made on the three gates at once, and every loyalist would have miserably perished. But even the priest was powerless to cope with the boiling throng. Yelling and screaming, by mere weight they drove in the pickets; cavalry went down like barley; nothing could withstand the avalanche. In vain the principal thoroughfare of New Ross was swept by the steady fire of artillery, which, falling on a dense mass of men wedged tight together in a narrow street, shore down the column's head as often as it rose. The legend of the dragon's teeth was realised that day; as fast as row drooped over row, so did other rows spring up, propelled by a giant force behind. One fanatic pushed to the gun's very muzzle, and, plunging in his hat and wig, cried, 'Come on, boys! her mouth's stopped!' The next moment he was blown into the air, but the gun was trodden down, dismounted—rendered useless; and the yeomanry retired under shelter. If the Croppies had obeyed their priest, all would have gone well. But much as they adored their Church, much as they longed for beatific rest in Paradise, they at this moment loved mundane whisky more. They plundered the houses of meat and drink, broached barrels in the market-place, poured fiery rivers of consolation down their parched gullets. In vain Mr. Harvey begged them to desist; in vain Father Roche threatened them with purgatorial ills. They

snapped their fingers at their God and at His minister. Had they not already suffered hell? Well, then, they were used to it. Its terrors had ceased to fill their souls with dread.

The royalist commandant was amazed at what he saw. It was a Pandemonium—but one whose horrors were evanescent. He only had to wait under his shelter. One little hour of drunken madness such as this, and the day would be his after all, in spite of apparently adverse destiny. The insurgents thought no more of a foe who had only retired out of sight down a by-street. They laughed and sang, and danced, and whirled in idiot frenzy; then fell into the gutter—drunk! By three in the afternoon such of the mob as could totter were hunted out of the town—those who remained were handed over to the tormentor. In the alleys and byways bodies choked the path three deep; two thousand more were borne away on carts. New Ross remained to his Majesty King George; but the terrors of the black 5th of June were not yet over. The gates were closed on the expulsion of the rabblement so quickly that many stragglers among the royalists were left without to batter on the wood in vain. The wounded amongst them were mercilessly piked, unless by a Romanist shibboleth they could 'bless themselves.' If they could go through the formula they might be saved—if not, they would, as a natural consequence, be butchered. A woman, vagrant in the turmoil, beheld a wounded friend who was a Protestant, and knew that he

could not pass the ordeal. She knelt by him, whispered some words which he repeated, and for that time was saved. But a more awful vengeance than this in the lanes around New Ross had been already wreaked away at Scullabogue. I have mentioned above that Kearnes' detachment had come from Carrickbyrne, close to which lies Scullabogue; but I did not mention that at that place there was a goodly barn—strong, well-built—which was excellently useful as a prison-house, and at this time contained some three hundred and twenty prisoners —men, women, and children.

When the tide at New Ross began to turn against the insurgents, Father Roche—whose reason had toppled, who was mad in that his influence had shrivelled away from him—swore to be revenged somehow, not on his own erring flock, but on those whom the ill-conditioned god of war was permitting to win the day! It was one of those awful moments when blinding ferocity dictates unchecked, which make one almost believe in the existence of Lucifer; when the human tendency to evil seems to pile itself up into a monument of what wickedness may be able to accomplish. A messenger was despatched to Scullabogue with a command to immolate the prisoners. Their gaoler, appalled at this cold-blooded order, refused to obey it unless the directions were more explicit. These arrived in due course, very clear indeed. 'The priest says the prisoners must be put to death.' There was no disobeying this. Croppies took off their long coats

to carry out the priest's decree. The handful of men were brought out and shot; the doors were firmly barred; the barn was set ablaze——there is no use in going into detail.

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By-and-by the flames slackened; the fire smouldered with fetid smoke; all was still within. The three hundred innocent women and children had been consumed as a holocaust on the altar of his majesty King George; who, large-minded man, was consistently without mercy for the Isle which God had given to his keeping; who was pitiless for the professors of a faith which did not agree with his own fancy; who, by reason of his policy regarding Ireland, must be held accountable for the tragedy which took place on that fifth of June within the barn at Scullabogue.

CHAPTER XIV.

VÆ VICTIS!

AFTER all, Scullabogue was but a retaliation for the eccentricities of the Gibbet-Rath, where the upper class had given the lower a harsh lesson in the amenities of warfare. The effect of any great breach of the law of order is always to throw out of gear the minds of those who come within its influence, which disturbance varies in form according to the mental state of the individual affected. The sensitive shrink appalled; those whose latent propensities to violence are usually kept within bounds by the law of order escape from its trammels. A large part of the community is kept to decent courses by fear of social regulations. It needs but the disturbing force of war, aided by the example of crime in superiors, to weaken this compelling sense of discipline and let loose the natural passions.

But let us hurry on; the tale is distressing still,

though time has masked it with a veil of ninety years.

A body of insurgents succeeded in taking Wexford, whose garrison evacuated it, retiring to Duncannon in disorder. The loyalists there who had howled over the loss of Enniscorthy, and were still in the dark as to the tactics of the Executive, grew furious. What was this? The Helots were ousting their lords and masters, were daring to be successful; even presumed to follow the example of the squireens, who had set the fashion of practical jokes. What is fun in one person may become impudence in another. Pitch-caps and half hangings were met by *carding*—a bit of genuine humour, whereby the rebels proceeded to tear the backs of their prisoners with boards stuck full of nails. So long as the loyalists had it their own way the conceit was amusing; now it became revoltingly vulgar. Retaliations and reprisals followed thick on one another. It was no longer a struggle of man against man, but of beast against beast—worse, of savage against savage.

Murphy's detachment, which, it will be remembered, fled precipitately at sight of a cloud of dust, rallied, and hung about the neighbourhood watching the moment to attack. They got horses how they could; sacked and burned private dwellings, whose rare spoils in the way of books were converted into saddles, with hay-ropes for stirrups. For ammunition they used pebbles or hardened balls of clay, and by pounding the necessary materials

in mortars, fabricated a kind of gunpowder which, while fresh, served its purpose well enough. Two or three cannons which they had captured were mounted on jaunting-cars, and exploded in awkward fashion by means of wisps of straw in guise of matches. Strange men, in half priestly garb, arose among the dragons' teeth, wearing one a helmet, another a clerical head-piece or discarded bearskin; vying one with the other in ferocious recklessness. It was now a religious crusade indeed, Protestant against Catholic, Catholic against Protestant, to the very death. Theological quibbles were forcibly disentangled.

The little garrison of Gorey, which had done such good service by sallying out and frightening the rebels, begged for reinforcements. Such a deed of prowess as was theirs may not, without serious hazard, be repeated twice. It would be awkward for Gorey to fall just now, for it was on the high road to the capital, and an accident might produce fatal riots there. Therefore, although it was not in accordance with the plan laid down, it was resolved at the Castle to assist Gorey. One Walpole, a carpet-knight, connected by blood with my lord Camden, was sent out to try his wings; and he caracoled upon his excursion as, in a non-hunting district, one might go out to exterminate a batch of fox cubs. Carelessly he led his reinforcements, enlivening the way with buoyant jest, as if the enemy was too contemptible to be really dangerous; neglecting the commonest precautions,

though warned of his rashness by his officers. At a spot called Tubbineering the aspect of the landscape, flat hitherto, changes. The road leaves the open, and plunges between high banks, with wide ditches at their bases, and rows of close bushes on their tops. Dense hedges intersect the fields, which (in the month of June) are thick with luxuriant foliage, while the ground is occupied by rich potato-crops, standing corn, and waving grass, affording ample concealment for such as may choose to lurk in it.

Through this defile Walpole led his men towards Gorey, carolling his stave, piping his little song, in close column, without flanking parties or skirmishers. The infantry were well advanced. As the road narrowed the progress of the column became slow and difficult. Suddenly, from the enclosures, a wild yell burst forth, accompanied by a rain of musketry. The carpet-knight fell on the first fire. The confusion was tremendous; to fight or to retreat impossible. The height and mazy number of the fences made the ground most favourable for bandit warfare, as the long pikes of the insurgents reached well-nigh across the narrow road, and those who escaped the first fire were perforated from behind by invisible assailants. The surprise of the troops was complete. Dragoons and infantry rolled in hopeless confusion one on the other. They were butchered to a man. The victorious rebels followed up their advantage, and hastened to occupy Gorey. but alas! cajoled by whisky the men of Father

Murphy were no more tractable than the men of Father Roche. Vainly he set mattrasses against the cellar-doors, in hopes that these would escape their scrutiny. But the instinct of Pat would find out a cellar-door on the pitchiest night. Regardless of the father's exhortations, Pat hurried to put that in his mouth which should steal away his brains —aye, and his hopes too—and remained in a frantic paroxysm of drunkenness for five whole days and nights.

Now, had this triumphant detachment (twenty thousand strong it was) marched straight on Arklow, then on Wicklow, both would certainly have given way without an effort, and Father Murphy's ambition might have been gratified of sleeping in my lord Camden's bed. But as the elements fought for England, so did the unstable Irish nature combat on the side of the Executive. There was a panic, of course, in Dublin. The Senate tore up Dame Street to the Castle, begging, with tears, that their valuable lives might not be placed in jeopardy. And the Privy Council, perceiving that things might be going just a little too far, graciously acceded to the humble petition of the faithful Lords and Commons, and despatched reinforcements southwards.

At this moment the position of the insurgents was by no means a despicable one, despite the weakness of their leaders. The failure at New Ross had compelled them for the time to abandon their attack on Waterford. But they held Enniscorthy and its river, and Wexford with its noble harbour; while,

for a base of operations, nothing could have been better than Vinegar Hill. To the north, too, they held Gorey, which was almost, from their point of view, the key of the capital itself. The hedges along the Dublin road were alive with disaffected peasants, who were longing for an opportunity of joining the advancing host. Arklow was half garrisoned, Wicklow scarcely garrisoned at all. If the rebel host had, ignoring whisky, marched straight northward, the march would have been an exultant progress of heroes, swelled as it proceeded by a torrent of exhilarated patriots.

But now the mice had played enough. They had nibbled the cheese and made unpleasant holes in it. It was time for the cat to pounce, and to pounce with a will. How dared these arrogant mice make holes in his Majesty's cheese? Arklow would be the next point—of course it would—so soon as the victors of Gorey could tear themselves away from alcohol. Five days of constant intoxication is trying to the most vigorous frame. Five days of cessation of hostilities is eminently convenient to an enemy who desires to act unflurried. Dublin was frightened out of its wits; the heads of the Catholic clergy were indignant and ashamed. Those lords and gentlemen who did not happen to be slaves of Lord Clare, or pensioners of England, shut themselves up in their country mansions to brood over their grief. Erin was in the convulsions which precede dissolution. The Executive—calculating spectators of the agony—deemed it time to come to her

succour, provided she would swear an oath to behave herself for ever and ever more. The Executive shook its wig and declared that to stop so awful a scandal any means were permissible. Instead of dribbling reinforcements by two or three hundred at a time, and so feeding the hopes of the rebels with sham victories, the Privy Council promised that the whole military strength at their command should be put in motion to punish the iniquitous with a severe and righteous sternness. Lord Clare assumed a picturesque attitude, in which sorrow was elegantly blended with anger—like that aggressive angel who never sinned, and who, glorying in the fact, postured with his waving sword at the gates of Eden. Lord Camden mumbled, as usual, that the whole affair was 'really too awful;' that he was glad her ladyship was safe; that he ought to be elevated to at least a dukedom as a reward for his prodigious services. The Protestant inhabitants of Wexford, whose lives for the last week or so had resembled those of the chosen people by the waters of Babylon, must instantly be relieved, he gurgled. Enniscorthy must be retaken; the camp at Vinegar Hill, and the hill itself, if necessary, must be blown into smithereens. Small men had been good enough for small work. Now General Lake himself, Commander of the Forces *pro tem.*, must head the Royal troops; the loyal Lords and Commons had no need to knock their knees together, their precious, honourable lives were in no real danger—never had been. General Lake and his men would set matters straight in a trice.

Having torn them at last from the whisky-bottle of Capua, Father Murphy led his forces against Arklow. His men were dispirited, unnerved by excessive carousing. Their heads ached; they felt unwell. Murphy and some other warrior-priests said mass for them as they stood bareheaded in the June sunlight, with nature smiling around.

'It was a holy war,' Murphy said. 'They had been guilty of backsliding; but man is weak and temptation is great; he would pray to the Holy Mother for them, that the cause might not suffer through their sin. He who addressed them, was, as they knew, invulnerable. These myriad bullets which he held in his hand had passed through his coat' ('See, boys, the holes!'), 'but could not hurt his skin. 'Twas the Holy Mother who watched over him and them. He would lead the van. Sure they would follow their priest—their pastor—their friend—their gineral!'

With howls of ecstatic and repentant fervour they cried out that they would. He had always led them to victory, their doughty priest! One more, two more successes, and Dublin would be theirs; then the whole country would unite; the Sassenagh would be driven into the sea; the object of the crusade would be accomplished—and through them, miserable sinners though they were.

They marched against Arklow on the 9th, and were repulsed thence with awful slaughter. The Royalists lost sixty men, the rebels left a thousand corpses stark upon the grass—amongst them,

Murphy the invulnerable. With dismay and despair they beheld his body roasted by the enlightened foe; in the gloaming they saw devils, in the guise of yeomen, dancing round the steaming corpse; fiends cleaning their boots with the fat that dripped from it. With howls of superstitious horror now they scurried away in the darkness, over field and hedge and fosse, through dyke and brake, in an agony of desperate fear quite different from a battle-panic, and arrived at length at the rendezvous like madmen, panting, incoherent, to tell their fearsome story.

Orders were issued to the Royalist forces to hold themselves in readiness. They had been ready for months past. A grand combined attack was to be made upon the rebel base, at Vinegar Hill, on the 21st of June. Lock, stock, and barrel, these insolent varlets were to be stamped out of existence, without parleying, as a warning to all traitors. Eight generals (no less) and twenty thousand soldiers were to take part in this glorious field-day. Why had this force lain idle hitherto? Why were driblets despatched to contend with myriads? It was now the 10th. With a cunning steadiness of purpose, almost too wicked even for humankind, ten days were permitted to elapse before the final blow was struck. Ten days of inaction—ten days of rumination over the awful future—ten days wherein to become utterly disorganised, and to commit such deeds as a carefully-fanned flame of accumulated hate and the hopelessness of unutter-

able despair should dictate. The insurgents saw themselves on the eve of destruction, taught by a bitter past that there was no hope or chance of mercy. Flung out of the pale of humanity, they were to be hunted down like vermin—like vermin then they would fly at the throats of the hunters, and do all the harm they could ere they received the *coup de grace*. A scene of horror commenced at Wexford, and endured during these ten days, over which we will draw a veil. Those who know aught of this spasm in Irish history will have been already sickened by the deeds on Wexford Bridge, and will be glad to be spared a new recital of them. Suffice it, that if General Lake had started immediately after the repulse of Arklow, these deeds would never have been committed. The desperate wretches would never have entered on their carnival of carnage; would never have been guilty of the crimes which, like Scullabogue and other nightmares, must all lie at good Farmer George's door.

The eight generals and the twenty thousand soldiers set off at last. Lake's plan was committed to paper in the clearest black and white. A simultaneous attack was to be made on Wexford and Enniscorthy, while the main body directed its attention to Vinegar Hill, which was to be carefully surrounded in order that no vermin might escape. If this delectable plan had been successfully carried out, the rebels would have been netted and slaughtered by thousands; but that Providence which had slept so long, which had been so blind to human

wrongs, so deaf to human prayers, awoke at last and prevented this wicked thing. At the critical moment two brigades were missing, the circle was incomplete, and, after a feeble cannonade, the rebel masses retired through the gap left by the missing links, to spread terror in the streets of Enniscorthy. Lake was furious. All that ingenuity could suggest had been brought to bear upon his plan. It is provoking when accident upsets our craftiest calculations. He had the mortification to perceive that he had not crushed the rebellion so completely as he had wished—by driving all the malcontents off the face of the earth. He abused his generals, but they showed that the fault was none of theirs; a higher power had checked their movements. Moore had met accidentally with a small detachment of rebels, who engaged him at Foulke's Mill; Needham, with a vivid remembrance of the disaster at Tubberneering, had moved through gorges with caution, delayed now and again by the errors of disaffected guides, the sulky inaction of impressed drivers. Lake might swear, but these were the facts. It was a pity; for, with the exception of the two missing links, the Royalist columns behaved admirably. They arrived at their posts in the nick of time. The rebels, in spite of their strong position, did little damage, for they aimed, as usual, too high. The priestly warriors acted with undaunted bravery, exhorting their men, horsewhipping them, even pistolling some who were endeavouring to seek safety in flight.

Father Roche was everywhere at once, clad in his vestments, with a brass helmet on his head. Father Clinch, of Enniscorthy, a man of huge stature, was conspicuous upon the hill; his broad cross-belts and large white horse were constantly looming through the smoke; his hat, with a crucifix stuck in it, was visible in six places at a time.

But no amount of desperate personal valour could save the doomed crowds. They fell back on Enniscorthy; sued there for mercy, in vain. They promised, as the men of Wexford had just done, to lay down their arms and return to their allegiance. Lake retorted by an offer of terms which were impossible of acceptance, and continued his bloody work. Every foot of Enniscorthy was stubbornly disputed, every yard was fiercely contested. The bridge was cleared at last. The jostling, shrieking mob spread itself upon the plain; their bodies lay heaped about the fields.

So the eight generals were crowned with laurels. The entire struggle had lasted a month, which might have been put down in two days. The enemy was finished off at a single blow—at last—a worthy enemy! An honourable triumph! Disciplined forces had fought successfully against a rabble so besotted as to believe that a blessed bit of paper round the neck would make them bullet-proof; so ignorant as to run after falling shells and pick them up, wondering, as they did so, what the strange things were that 'spat at them.'

When Scotland chose to rise, her misguided

antics were repressed at once. Her leaders met the fate which they had courted, and there was an end of the matter. With Ireland it was otherwise. The freaks of her unstable nature were coldly calculated on; gins were set for her sliding feet; she fell into a trap, and grievous was her punishment. When the Americans rose against British misrule, their commanders were always treated with military courtesy. In Ireland masters and men were strung up side by side, or shot down, without a 'by your leave,' like dogs. Till the horror of a war of classes was intensified by the grafting on it of religious fanaticism, the opinions of the malcontents were of the broadest kind. All they demanded was social equality and freedom of conscience. Their demands were met by blows. Innocent and harmless men were lacerated by petty tyranny and wanton ill-usage, till they could endure no more. Then prudence was thrown to the winds. It was like the herd of maddened swine rushing headlong down a precipice into the gulf.

As far as concerns the 'Hurry,' the example of massacre was set in the first instance by the 'Party of Order.' The rebels tried sometimes to proselytise; the Royalists were content to murder. The Royalists were never anything but cruel. The rebels hovered strangely 'twixt lenity and cruelty, according to the humour of the moment. With the supposed advantage of a little education, the squireens outheroded the conduct of those who were quite ignorant; whereby we may gather that a little

knowledge is as fatal as a little of anything else; for their scraps of education, instead of tempering their native savagery, merely served to instil into their warped minds an idea of superiority and dominion.

So far as the Croppies were concerned, the rebellion ended with the clever feat of General Lake. The few who escaped his vengeance spread themselves over the country in predatory bands. Some sought refuge in the Wicklow hills; some perished miserably as banditti; few ever returned to their homes. It was not death so much that the Irish peasant feared. His life was wretched. He had been brought up to consider that three kinds of death were natural—first, in his bed; secondly, by hanging at assize time; thirdly, of collapse when the potato crop went wrong. He could face death. *It was torture that he dreaded*—the pitch-caps, the picketings, the roastings alive, the lash. These it was that made a savage and a coward of him.

So far as the executive was concerned, the rebellion was by no means over. Gordon, a Protestant clergyman and reliable witness, tells us that 'more than fell in battle in Wexford were slain afterwards in cold blood.' Those who would not surrender were hunted down; those who did were strung up without a form of trial. Vinegar Hill became *elastic* through the numberless victims who had found rest and a merciful oblivion beneath its sod.

So soon as massacre, in garb of war, had done

her work, judicial murder commenced on a more extended scale. When the appetite of Até was sated in the country, she moved with the Eumenides —faithful and obedient maids of honour—to the capital, for change of air and scene.

END OF VOL. II.

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